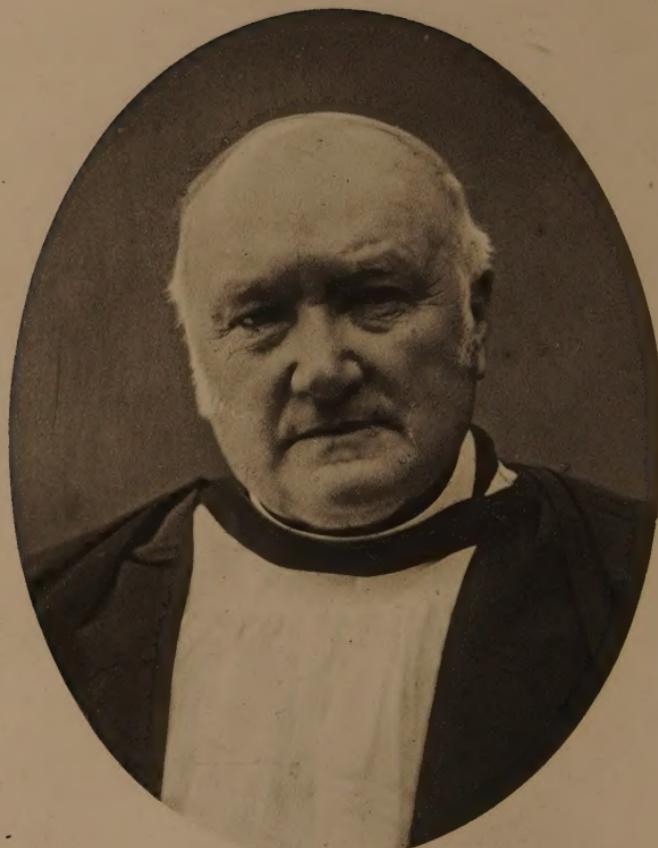




Preachers of the Age

THE BISHOP OF DERRY AND
RAPHOE



Yours Most Truly
William Dwyer and Reproe

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VERBUM CRUCIS;

BEING

*TEN SERMONS ON THE MYSTERY AND
THE WORDS OF THE CROSS.*

TO WHICH ARE ADDED SOME OTHER

SERMONS PREACHED ON PUBLIC OCCASIONS.

BY

WILLIAM ALEXANDER, D.D., D.C.L.,
LORD BISHOP OF DERRY AND RAPHOE.

“ Verbum enim crucis his qui salvi fiunt virtus Dei est.”

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“ Nos autem prædicamus Christum crucifixum.”

PREFACE.

THE first ten sermons in this volume have, the author believes, a real and vital thread of connection. Sermons I.¹ and II. direct attention to the lights which are thrown upon the mystery of the cross by the Incarnation and by the voluntary self-oblation of our Lord; and, with the full perception of these truths, some at least of our most serious difficulties are removed. The seven discourses upon the Last Words aim at following the rays of holiness and wisdom which issue from the cross. The last of the series is intended to show what heart and hope is given to missionary work by that which seems at first but an almost accidental circumstance in the august symbolism of the cross. The publication of this discourse has been repeatedly called for by those whose opinion the writer is bound to respect.

The four sermons outside this series are intended to bear upon certain aspects of the Bible and of the Church. At the time when it was delivered, Sermon XII. seemed to awaken a little storm—the preacher to the present day feels

¹ The passage to which a grateful reference is made in Sermon I. will be found in "Is life worth living? An eightfold answer." By John Clifford, D.D. pp. 99-104 (Sixth Edition, Marlborough & Co.).

unable to say why. It was called in one quarter "an extraordinary sermon;" he who probably knows it best fears that it is a very ordinary one. Sermon XIII. was preached a short six months ago, at the enthronement of Archbishop Magee. What that great prelate said about it may not be repeated. A strong man's tenderness is a sacred thing. The address to Irish Churchmen, which stands last, gave some offence. The writer is sorry that he feels obliged to leave the thing as it originally stood. Time will, perhaps, justify him.

There are but two more points to be mentioned.

1. Very many valued friends have at different times asked specially for the publication of certain of the author's sermons. He has only, however, printed one volume of hortatory discourses besides the present. He desires to confess that the publication of a sermon is a very difficult task in his case. The truth is that for very many years he has never but twice or thrice written an entire sermon, or anything like it. His memory and nerve alike exact of him a complete skeleton of the whole substance, with a few entire leading sentences, to lay before him. But he often gets away from this mooring into another track. In any event, after a few weeks he finds it very hard to remember much of what he said, or to retrace his course through such reports as he can procure. Thus the very things which excited interest in the hearers seem to evaporate; and his written-out sermon is a poor and faded version of that which was faulty enough in itself.

2. As the evening of his life closes in, the preacher of these sermons desires more and more to fall back upon what may be called the irreducible *minimum* of a Christian Churchman's belief. He has no wish to be numbered

among the combative preachers of the Church militant. These combative preachers he is wont to reduce to *three* classes. There are those who, with many professions of affection and declarations of real unity, deftly drive their epigrams into the heart of him whom they affect to salute. So "Joab took Amasa by the beard . . . to kiss him," after saying, "art thou in health, my brother?" But "he smote him in the fifth rib, . . . and he died."¹ These controversialists, with sweet words about substantial agreement on their lips, but a sword half hidden in their hand, may be called *Joabites*. Another class of combative preachers remind one of another Old Testament story. Their own pronunciation of every syllable in theology is the test, and those who articulate differently deserve no quarter. These men are like the *Gilcadites* at the passages of Jordan. They invite the unfortunate Ephraimite just to "say Shibboleth," and smite him if he "cannot frame to pronounce it right."² For the forerunners of the third class he turns to a certain famous riot. A vast population cried out "all with one voice about the space of two hours, Great is Diana of the Ephesians!" The town-clerk scarcely appeased the people by the popular assumption that "these things cannot be spoken against." It is true that change was in the air; that days were beginning to dawn which would prove that Diana is not so great after all; and that if these things cannot now be spoken *against*, it is only because no man is left upon the earth to speak *for* them.³ And these combative theologians of causes long popular, but about to fall, may be called *Ephesian* controversialists, whose argument is an assumption and their stock-in-trade a cry. Among such controversialists—*Joabite*, *Gileadite*, *Ephesian*—the writer of

¹ 2 Sam. xx. 9, 10.

² Judg. xii. 6.

³ Acts xix. 28-37.

these sermons hopes never to be numbered, and from their anger he prays to be delivered. His wish is to deliver his soul; to preach the gospel as he has received it; to speak peace to the children of God; and to hold up Christ crucified and risen, living in His Church, and working through His word and sacraments, to reflective people, who, in an age of perplexity, desire to reconcile that in them which feels and prays with that which thinks.

WILLIAM DERRY AND RAPHOE.

PALACE, LONDONDERRY,
September 9, 1891.



*Nos autem praedicamus Christum
crucifixum*

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THE INCARNATION AND THE
MYSTERY OF THE CROSS.

SERMON I.¹

THE INCARNATION AND THE MYSTERY OF THE CROSS.

“Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise.”—MATT. i. 18.

A STRANGE idea seems to be current (and, indeed, has been very lately expressed in public by a distinguished person) that a large number of the texts selected by preachers are useless, or even bad. Perhaps some persons in this vast congregation may be inclined to think in this way of the text which I have just repeated. Possibly they may be saying to themselves that they could understand its selection for Christmas Day, or for a gathering of infant schools, but that they scarcely see what peculiar fitness it possesses for a great miscellaneous audience.

Now, if you have been listening, you will have remarked that this very evening the Church recommences her ordered reading of the Gospels with the passage in which this text stands.² Here, in this verse, with the simple emphasis of the two names, Jesus Christ—in themselves an implicit creed—is the porch, as strong as it is ample, through which faith

¹ Preached in Westminster Abbey, Sunday, July 6th, 1890. (Fifth

Sunday after Trinity.)

² See the Calendar of Lessons for the evening of July 6th.

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must pass into the solemn fortress of Divine truth. Without to-night's Second Lesson, and its parallel in St. Luke, the cross would be the record of a martyrdom, not the altar of a sacrifice. Without the light thrown from the historical narrative of the Incarnation, the Atonement would be impossible.

Let our subject to-night be the Incarnation, and let us especially bear in mind the light which it throws upon the cross.

I. Let us state the doctrine of the Incarnation in language as unscholastic and informal as possible.

That glorious Person, God the Word—the off-raying of the Father's glory, and the stamped copy of His substance¹—assumed human nature by a birth in time of a virgin's womb. It was a true human birth, with conception, formation, bringing forth, and nativity. There was a true human body compacted of flesh and blood. There was a true human soul, *i.e.* a mind really capable of learning; a will really capable of choice; desires really felt for rest, food, deliverance from pain; real sinless emotions, such as pain, indignation, grief, pity, even wonder. He was like us in form, feature, language, thought; like us in affections, with all their beautiful strength and still more beautiful weakness. He was unlike us only in being without sin. St. Paul and St. John are in vital agreement.² “In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead in bodily wise,” exclaims one apostle. “The Word was God . . . and the Word became flesh,” writes the other. “The fulness of the Godhead” in

¹ ἀπαύγασμα τῆς δόξης, καὶ χαρακτὴρ τῆς ὑποστάσεως αὐτοῦ. (Heb. i. 3.) It will be observed that *ἀπαύγασμα* is a passive noun, and that “off-raying” must be taken in the sense of “the Person *off-rayed*.”

² Col. ii. 9; John i. 14.

Christ answers to "The Word was God." "The fulness of the Godhead dwelleth in bodily wise" is but another form of saying, "The Word was made flesh."

I am not about to invite you to fight over again the battle of the Creeds. I shall not attempt to drag you round the weary circle of errors which reach one or other of three inevitable goals; as they either unhumanize or undify the God-Man, or lead us up to a shape which is neither truly human nor properly Divine, but a monstrous and contradictory mixture of the two. The Church has a long memory and a careful tongue; her recollections are stored, and her ultimate expressions immortally fixed, in the Creeds. To them I refer you.

II. I assume, then, that the dogma of the Incarnation is sufficiently known by us. You will tell me that proof is more needed than statement. You hold, perhaps, that it is "unproved and unprovable."

Let me briefly present you with a moral argument of no ordinary weight as addressed to the moral nature—one of those arguments at which the clever may sneer, but which the wise will respect.

The moral character of every product leads us up and on to the producer. The character of Christ is the product here. *How* was it produced?

We are not merely told with a vague panegyric that this character was flawless, virgin-white. We have a detailed presentation of it. For instance, we have one record of a single day's life and work,¹ which shows us that He who was the Ideal of a Divine humanity came to very un-ideal poverty and very commonplace distress. How He bore Himself in the place of worship; in the sick-room;

¹ Mark i. 21-35.

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with the great squalid, festering masses of repulsive misery crowded before Him ; how His sleep was interrupted ; why He rose up early ; how He acted when His hardly-won communion with His Father was rudely interrupted ;—all this we have depicted with a simple and hurried but expressive pencil. Is there anything in the narrative which falls short of the claims of a sinless Being, anything which rings false to the most sensitive ear ?

Further, this character, consistent as it is, harmonious, worked out in detail, secures to itself a fourfold witness. It is witnessed to by the *indifferent*, and by those who are actually *hostile*. The man who of all others had the greatest interest in blackening Jesus, as he dashes down the silver pieces which scorched him as if they were red-hot, was constrained to exclaim, “I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood.”¹ But the Son of Man has also witnesses in His *friends*. And our friends are more formidable judges of our character than our enemies. These are those who see us in our moments of weariness, of relaxation, when we are off our guard. Men who rise above the average also are doomed to work, like bees, under glass hives ; to be followed by a multitudinous espionage, and to have their words and actions taken down by unsuspected pencils. Their very table-talk one day is listened to by a vast audience. But, in the case of Jesus, His *friends* reverse all that we know or have observed of human nature. A single unguarded word, a single selfish action, a single questionable look, would have marred that high ideal and shattered that radiant idol. But no such word was ever spoken, no such action was ever done, no such look was ever worn by those gentle features. A few hours

¹ Matt. xxvii. 4.

after His departure His disciples worshipped Him;¹ a few years after, one who had been with Him in the closest intimacy could say, in the name of all His friends—"we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father."² But, to crown all this witness, we come to yet another—the highest, strangest, most irresistible of all. There is a witness yet more exacting than that of *enemies* or of *friends*. There is one human being who must know each man more thoroughly than any other; who can pass an all but infallible judgment upon us. Our word *conscience*³ probably indicates a knowledge which we participate with another, and that other our inner *self*.

What was *His* self-judgment as pronounced by that exquisitely sensitive conscience? "I do always those things that please the Father."⁴ In that closing hour, when our souls have strange awakenings; when an electric light suddenly turned on brings out every leaf and twig upon the whole plant of the moral life;—in that searching and awful hour Jesus lifts up to heaven eyes that are pure as that heaven itself, and cries to His Father with entire simplicity, "I have glorified Thee on the earth: I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do."⁵

"But the evangelists," it may be said, "and especially St. John, were in a conspiracy to magnify the character of Jesus." If so, at all events they have succeeded in doing what has baffled the formulæ of philosophy and the imagination of romance.

¹ Luke xxiv. 52.

² John i. 14.

³ Like its Greek equivalent *συνείδησις*. Bishop Sanderson, however, seems to consider that the word implies a double object of knowledge—a joint knowing of the individual action, and of the general moral principle to which it is to be referred. ("De Oblig. Consc.," i.)

⁴ John viii. 29.

⁵ John xvii. 4.

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But suffer me to point out *one* agreement in the four evangelists,—not of language, not of incident, but of principle; an agreement at once so subtle and so real that it cannot have arisen from pre-engagement. Draw near to the cross, and, under the guidance of the evangelists, listen to the last words of your dying Saviour. The two first evangelists agree in placing on His lips one sentence, and one alone. St. Luke gives three and St. John three, each totally different from the other and from St. Matthew.

The agreement in principle consists in a remarkable omission, a peculiar abstinence. There is a word of forgiveness; of anguish of soul and body; of human love; an expression of joy in a finished work; an utterance which shows that the clouds are rolled away; a pardon also bestowed upon one individual.

But there is one note, somewhere to be detected in the music of all truly holy death-beds, of which we hear nothing upon Calvary. All other religious men (and Jesus was at least *that!*) pass away with some expression of penitence, with some cry for pardon. But as the generations listen, and count the words from those white lips, they can detect no half-sigh, no broken syllable of penitence. Well for sinners that they cannot! If they could, we should be forced to see upon the cross the anguish of a martyr, not the agony of a God.

When One who walked the waves of life never wets His footsteps nor His hair with one drop of its bitter spray; when He who preached the Sermon on the Mount practically asserts, “I have lived it—the Beatitudes are My own picture;” when He who had a higher ideal of duty than ever floated before the soul of saint or sage tells the ages, “I show you these splendid Alpine ranges, and stand above

them on a loftier peak ;" when He abides the scrutiny of the indifferent, of enemies, of friends, of himself ; when He can find no subject for confession, no place for pardon, in all the retrospect of that crowded life ;—then we are in the presence of a unique product in the whole human family.

A product so unique may well have a unique productive cause. We may be more ready to believe that no bar sinister of heredity is drawn across that white escutcheon. We listen with reverence, at least, when we are told that the Holy Ghost was the creative cause of His human existence ; that the altar of a Virgin's womb was touched with fire from heaven. "The birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise : . . . His mother Mary was . . . found with Child of the Holy Ghost."¹

¹ I desire to add to this argument some admirable sentences by a French preacher. "The origin of Jesus is not like ours. He is not born like us, 'of blood, nor of carnal instinct, nor of will of man.' Bearing, as He does, into humanity the secret and the power of being born again of the Spirit, He is born Himself of woman and of the Spirit of God. The Spirit of God is the supreme Force. He commands the general evolution, and presides over the ordered and progressive movement, of the universe. As He intervened in chaos and matter to produce sensitive existence, as He intervened in animal nature to produce being which thinks ; so in being which thinks He intervenes that the earth may bring forth its fruit, that humanity may see the Saviour, the Holy One, the Son of God, spring forth. The result of the earlier Divine intervention was only a creature ; the result in this case is on a level with the Infinite—God unites Himself personally to His work. As He had incarnated life in matter, sensation in life, thought in sensation, He now incarnates Himself in humanity. The various kingdoms are *superposed*, so to speak, and mutually envelop each other. The kingdom of life is added to that of matter, the animal kingdom to that of life, the human kingdom to that of animality. But now we have reached the kingdom of God and that of the Son of God in humanity. All these successive *geneses* constitute in their totality the lofty dream of the earth. They are all mysterious ; and the more perfect the thing created the

But when the Incarnation is *stated*, when arguments are adduced in *proof*, difficulties of another kind emerge. Alas ! if we may credit novels and periodicals, Englishmen, once so daring and joyous, have become a subtle and suffering generation. The possibility of a perfect sympathy on the part of the God-Man with His weak and suffering brethren has always been felt to be one of the most tender and beautiful results of the Incarnation. “Surely, as we know,¹ not of angels does He lay hold, but of Abraham’s seed does He lay hold ; whence He was morally bound to be made like to His brethren in all things, that He might become a merciful and faithful High Priest in the things that pertain to God, unto the end of ever making propitiation² for the sins of the people. For in that He Himself suffered by having been tried, He is able to succour those who are daily undergoing trial.”³ “For we have not a High Priest who is not able to sympathize with our infirmities, but One tried, with trials whose effect remains,⁴ in all

deeper is the mystery. Life is more hidden than matter ; the animal is more enigmatic than organic life ; man is more inscrutable than the animal ; Jesus is more impenetrable than all. He who would scrutinize the origins of things may grasp the material conditions in which beings are produced, but the first cause eludes his experiments. Whence comes matter ? whence life ? whence sensitive existence ? whence being which thinks ? whence genius ? whence comes the Christ ? The science which confines itself within phenomena answers to these questions—‘I do not know.’ The reason which perceives causes replies—‘from the Spirit of God.’ Under what factual and historical form was the action of the Spirit manifested in the genesis of Jesus ? We must ask the Gospel documents, the only pages in antiquity which teach us with any detail upon that event, concealed, almost unnoticed, which yet has succeeded in changing the face of the world.” (Didon. “Jésus-Christ.” Liv. I. “Les origines de Jésus.” Ch. ii. “Sa Conception.” Tom. i. 34, 35.)

¹ οὐ γὰρ δῆπον.

² εἰς τὸ ιλάσκεσθαι.

³ τοῖς πειραζομένοις. (Heb. ii. 17, 18.)

⁴ πεπειρασμένον.

respects according to His likeness¹ to us, yet without sin."

Nothing, one would have thought, could be plainer ; no news more radiant and joyful. Yet the human heart, it appears, will cheat itself out of its own appointed bliss. That which the mariner at first hailed as a fair and distant land, and afterwards feared might be a sea-fog, he finds as he draws near to be an iceberg.

Let us grapple with these surmises at once.

"Made like to His brethren in *all things!*" "Alas ! not *that*," say these sad and weary natures. "He is really very dissimilar in some most important respects. One who is to come very close to us must be of our *time*. If the chivalrous gentleman of the sixteenth century, clad in steel, with the elaborate lace falling over his breast-plate, could become alive and step down from his place, he never could really be my friend. He might use to some extent the vocables of the same language ; but his thoughts could find no channel of communication, no bridge by which they might pass to me. The damp and mould of antiquity would chill all sweet familiarity to death. I might admire him, or be awed by him, or laugh quietly at him. I could scarcely ask for his advice, or find myself in the capacity of loving him. Christ differs from us in *time*. One who is to come very close to us in practical sympathy must have walked all the way along the line of our actual *experience* ; but His individual experience is quite other than ours. One who is to come very close to us must have some bitter *sense of deficiencies*, even of *sins* like ours ; but His nature is so different from ours that He has no *sin*.

¹ καθ' δμοιότητα, *pro similitudine*. The older Latin has *secundum similitudinem*, i.e. "like us."

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One who is to come very close to us children of science and advanced civilization, ‘the heirs of all the ages,’ must have spoken of the sort of knowledge which we value supremely; but His utterances are totally *different* in texture and in *character of gifts* from which they spring. The gallery round which His words echo is not that which repeats the prophetic aphorisms of Bacon, or the consummate positive common-sense of Aristotle and Mill. For the first of these reasons, in spite of all His sweetness and philanthropy, I contemplate Him as something frigid and distant; for the second, He is wanting in plastic elasticity; for the third, He may be the bright and Morning Star, but He shines with a cold and far-away radiance; for the last reason, He disappoints me.”

Let us consider these objections for a little.¹

1. The Christ differs from us in *time*.

But, after all that can plausibly be said, is it only a contemporary who can come very close to us?

On the one side, the animalism of Pompeii finds a terrible response in the lower nature of every man who looks upon its terrible and rampant triumphs. There is a fatal poison in lines of Lucretius and passionate strains of Ovid which have still life enough to set the veins on fire, and do the work of hell.

On the other side, the reason of Aristotle trains generations of thinkers. The “Lives” of Plutarch fire a Napoleon’s ambition, or teach moderation and patriotism

¹ For the statement of these objections to the perfect sympathy of the Incarnation, and for the answers to them, the preacher feels that he is very deeply indebted to some sermons by the Rev. Dr. Clifford, whose depth of thought is mated with a singular majesty of expression. The debt is peculiarly great in the sections numbered 1 and 3.

to a Washington or a Pitt. The spider “lays hands” in the palace, and the web is shortly unravelled or swept away. But the human mind spins subtler threads, traversed by a beautiful, passionate, thrilling life. The dead are with us. What are centuries in this respect? We smile with the smiles, and weep with the tears, of centuries whose material traces are shapeless ruins. In our service to-night, we uttered the praises and aspirations of men who were dead more than a thousand years before the first stones of this great Abbey were hewn. It is in contrast with the mutability of a generation of earthly teachers, passing away through that fair and admirable exit from all their honoured moral and spiritual life,¹ that the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews uses language exactly appropriate to our present purpose of Jesus as One above time and change. “Jesus Christ is yesterday and to-day the Same; ay, and unto the ages.”² To Him in the old psalm that title was given, in contrast with the earth that perishes, and the heavens waxing old—“but Thou art the Same.”³ The Saviour of the first century is the Saviour of the nineteenth. The Man of all time is the Man of our time. The eternal Manhood speaks to all that is eternal and permanent in man.

2. But Christ, it is urged, has traversed a different section of human life, and is different in *experience* from us.

The changes are rung upon the want of absolute identity of circumstances. The small, common, obscure trials of human existence; not so much “the lightning, the

¹ ἀναθεωροῦντες τὴν ἐκβασιν τῆς ἀναστροφῆς. (Heb. xiii. 7.)

² “As if he would say: The same Christ who was with them is with you, and will be with those who are to come even to the end of time. Yesterday He was with the fathers, to-day He is with you; He will also be with those who succeed you even unto the ages.” (Herv.)

³ ὁ Αὐτός. (Ps. cii. 27, LXX.)

fierce winds, and trampling waves," the regal and magnificent sorrows, as the dull action of untragedical disappointments ; the corroding cares of domestic life, of anxieties connected with home and children ; the slow martyrdom of age ;—of this the King of sorrows knew nothing.

Are we, then, prepared to demand that He who came from heaven to earth must travel every inch of human experience ? How many reincarnations must take place ? The almost infinite drafts upon time which have been necessary for the death of suns, and the weaving and colouring of stars, would not be sufficient to meet the calls made upon them by this preposterous claim. The very pygmy of the African forest might make demand for a dwarfish Messiah to work out righteousness as he best might under such strange conditions. In the Incarnation of the text the true universality is secured. It embraces the primordial elements of a complete human life ; the materials of a universal experience of trial, sorrow, pain, and death. The *facts*, from the nature of the case, are individual and particular ; under them and in them is the *spirit* which is able to assimilate and spiritualize the facts of every life.

3. Yet again it is urged, "The Christ of orthodox theology, tempted, yet without sin, may be said to have a true humanity ; but that humanity is not quite human ; it is not mine. What in all my life is worst, most tragic, for *me*?—I know too well. The marred purpose ; the wreck of passion ; the fierce, angry red scar of sin ; the fallen aspiration ; the reflection that God kindled a light in the tabernacle of my soul, that He made me to be a sword in His hand ; that by my own fault I have become a broken blade in the battle, a shivered lamp in the sanctuary. I turn to Jesus upon the cross. I admit

the tragic grandeur, the marvellous import of Calvary, and bow my head in something *almost* more than admiration. Never have three such hours struck upon the clock of time. Never has the earth reeled, and the sky darkened, beneath and over a death so like a sacrifice. You bid me look and listen under that sullen sky. Alas! there is something which I do *not* hear. There is no choking sob ending in a cry for pardon. You explain to me that the very absence of that cry is the proof and earnest of a Divine humanity. But that which establishes the Divine humanity is fatal to the human humanity. How can there be a complete sympathy with *me* in this sinless Paragon of the ages?"

A practical answer is the only one which I can give you.

If you were this very evening in some way or other brought into near and appalling contact with the conscious sense of some sin, to whom would you go for help? To some man of the world, ruled by that code of honour which seems so lax, but which can be so terribly unforgiving? To some woman of the world, with the exquisite finish of her polished scorn? No! but to the purest and most Christ-like whom you could find; simply because an unerring instinct tells you that the purest will also be the gentlest. For, indeed, every advance in purity is an advance in love. Purity in ourselves and sympathy with others are two strings in perfect unison. The vibration of one will always ensure a response from the other. In the logic of earth, the premiss of perfect purity leads down to imperfect sympathy; in the logic of heaven its conclusion is perfect sympathy.

4. But once more it is objected. "Christ is different from us of this age in *style* and *character of endowment*. We are the children of the nineteenth century. What we expect He scarcely gives. Beside the Hebrew miracle

of sanctity, there stands through all the summers the Greek miracle of beauty, and the modern miracle of exact science. The Christ neither invented, nor wrote, nor spoke with consummate beauty, or with the forms of finished logic, or with the spell of perfect eloquence."

All this is deplorably unjust. His words, His spirit, have been *creative*. They are at the root of all that lives and loves.

But there is one short word yet to be spoken which covers a whole department of human life, and with which alone Christ professes to be concerned. There are three terms as momentous as they are short—three monosyllables in our language which have for their subject three great sciences. Crime is the subject-matter of law, vice of morality, but sin of theology on its practical side. Theology has two great chapters—one upon the nature of God, so far as it is revealed to man ; the other upon sin, its essence, its practice, its removal. Sin is something and somewhere for every man and woman in the world. It is all and everywhere for some.

Christ never said that He came to found a school of literature, or logic, or art, or science—though He did all this indirectly. But Christ and His disciples do tell us that He came to deal with sin, to abolish (upon His own terms) its guilt and very being. This, then, is just the centre and essence of His teaching. This is what even His miracles tell us. There is something more blighting than leprosy ; more crippling than paralysis ; more melancholy than deafness, or blindness, or loss of speech. A line of light from His lifted finger runs along the whole dark ranks of diseases, and enables us to spell out the meaning of His lesson : "Son, thy sins be forgiven thee. Sin no more. Neither

do I condemn thee ; go, and sin no more." So integral a part is this of His mission that it is bound up for ever with His very name.

In the Lesson which we heard to-night, and of which the text forms the opening, how large a space is given to the name ! An angel brings it from heaven, and whispers it to the good man in his holy dream. "She shall bring forth a Son, and thou shalt call His name Jesus : for He shall save His people from their sins."¹ There is one mighty monarch with whose name *greatness* is incorporated—Charlemagne. But in our Redeemer's name (while His Godhead is latent in it, while it is practically equivalent to Emmanuel, so that the Emmanuel *idea* is in the Jesus *name*) it is salvation from sin which lights it up from within—salvation from the power and from the guilt of sin.

Is there any other of the chiefs of humanity who has just that message, or just that power ? Life, I know, is many-sided. I wish for no mutilation of it. If you want truth in abstract science, or in its applications, enter the halls where the "merchants of light" display their precious ware. If you aim at precision of thought, practise logical analysis under the searching criticism of the masters of philosophy. If you would acquire literary finish, commune with the immortal models of prose and verse. If you aspire to understand commerce, get your tape-line and telephone, and learn to interpret the jargon of the Stock Exchange. If you would be a successful politician, forget the marble shapes in this great temple of the dead. Abjure principles. Seek power and ensue it. Go to them that sell, and find out what they recommend you to buy. It will be the feat of phraseology, not the force of argument ; it will be a trick,

¹ Matt. i. 21-25.

18 THE INCARNATION, AND MYSTERY OF THE CROSS.

not the masculine triumph of truth and reason. I know that. But if you *will* have the article, you must pay the market-price.

I wish to avoid all profane comparisons. God forbid that I should speak as if our Lord were but the Mozart, or Shakespeare, or Newton of the spiritual world—"enormously clever about the soul," as a German once said. But if you have learned what sin is; if you want sin detected, pardoned, removed, killed down to its very roots; I know, and the whole world can give you, no other Name.

I need scarcely say that the applications of the Incarnation are endless. From it comes an infinite wealth of tender humanity to the suffering and the ignorant. "Do no good to any man; so shalt thou spare much trouble to thine own flesh," says the Egyptian book of proverbs. "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these *My brethren*, ye have done it unto Me," answers our incarnate Lord. Sacraments, again, issue from the wounded side, grafting us into His life, and feeding us with His very self. But it is this abolition of sin which is vital and central. Old religions are passing away. No other positive religion can ever again acquire any large dominion over human souls. On all this earth the cross is the only altar. Here is a great light upon the cross. Such a death came from such a birth. The death was on this wise, because "the birth was on this wise."

THE SELF-OBLIGATION OF THE
CROSS.

SERMON II.¹

THE SELF-OBLATION OF THE CROSS.

“ He hath poured out His soul unto death.”—ISA. liii. 12.

THE verb rendered here, “ He hath poured out,” like so many others in Hebrew, is simple and pictorial.² It is literally to make bare or uncover; and the image which it suggests is that of a vessel which a strong and generous hand pours out—not slowly or grudgingly, as if each drop was too precious to be lost, but so that all the inside of the vase which holds the liquid is left bare. And here the vessel of the living soul was emptied, not by force from without, not with any extorted consent on His part, but by His own hand, with His whole heart, lavishly, profusely, with a Divine generosity, with a prodigality of love. It is one of the strongest expressions for a *voluntary* death, for a life *freely* given.

It will tend to throw light upon the cross if we follow out this thought to-day. This, perhaps, may be best done by considering the predictions of Jesus concerning His death, and by so doing we shall understand better His mission and His sacrifice.

¹ Preached in substance in Derry Cathedral, Palm Sunday, 1884.

² שָׁׁלַח.

I. The predictions of Jesus concerning His death commence earlier in St. John than in the other evangelists.

In the synoptics the cross is, to speak generally, half hidden up to the Transfiguration. Half hidden, like a Calvary in a wood; but seen, like it, when the screen of leaves is blown aside. There is something solemn in the first use of great words in the New Testament. Here is the first place where we find it—the first time when we read that it passed the lips of Jesus. “He that taketh not his cross, and followeth after Me, is not worthy of Me.”¹ After the Transfiguration in the three synoptical Gospels, one spectral peak after another in the long defile that lies between the Son of God and the distant heaven is crowned by the cross.

But St. John allows us to see that it was present thought to the Saviour’s mind. Something in the same way as in the Catacombs there is no crucifix, and little of the palpable cross, but many significant hints (as in the shape of a letter) indicate that the cross was ever present to the minds of those who worshipped there.

At the first Passover He speaks of “destroying the Temple.” “But He spake of that Temple which is His body.”² To Nicodemus He passes from the necessity and benefits of the new birth of water and the Spirit to its source. Of the death of the Man who had no sin, the elevation of the serpent who had no venom is the type and image. The death of Christ is the cause of the grace of baptism, the centre of the whole circle of salvation.³ This scarlet thread runs through the whole texture of the discourse in the sixth chapter of St. John.⁴ Think again of

¹ Matt. x. 38.

² John ii. 18-20.

³ John iii. 14, 15. See Chrysost. *in loc.*

⁴ See especially vers. 33-51.

the utterance—"when ye have lifted up the Son of man."¹ Magnificent irony! by which the elevation of a dying man is blended in one symbol with His elevation to the throne, and the shadow of a piece of wood raised by the legionaries a few feet over the soil of Syria projected into the heaven of heavens.

Think, too, of the foreknowledge and consequent deliberate acceptance involved in the deep view which the human mind of Jesus must have possessed of the intimations of the prophetic Scriptures. Take one passage only, and let it be from the Book of Psalms.

The fortieth psalm, being subjectively Messianic, gives us the inner meaning of the Passion. It is, so to speak, the theological counterpart of the twenty-second. The twenty-second gives us the Atonement in the realm of fact, the fortieth in the realm of idea. The first speaks of the crucifixion of the body in the sight of man, the latter of the crucifixion of the will in the sight of God.

And this great psalm occupies a place in revelation which is not always perceived. "Lo, I come," says the Redeemer: "in the volume of the book it is written of Me."² What is the scroll of which He speaks? Scarcely the Pentateuch; and there was no other prophetic scripture to which David could have referred in his day. David had another volume in his eye and head and heart, as the *Messiah's contract*³—the very psalm which was just written. From that moment it was bound, as it were, with a new incumbence on Him who was to be our Sacrifice, to do God's will. With that eye of His which

¹ John viii. 28; cf. xii. 32-34. ² Ps. xl. 7, 8.

³ "Messiae syngrapha."

reads all spiritual truth through and through, He sees the inadequacy of sacrifice, the Divine weariness with it. Humanity in its highest idea presented before God ; the sacrifice of a perfect human will ; this was God's way of bringing man to Himself. An obedience without flaw in mortal flesh was required. "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God"—"in the volume of the book it is written of Me." By the very words, written upon the very scroll, the pledge was given. The Messiah's motto is chosen ; that motto is, "*I come.*"¹ It is the *Ich dien* of the Heir of all things, the everlasting Son of the Father. It is the secret of His sacrifice, and His Father's acceptance of it. "That which was well-pleasing was not the death as such, but the will of One who died so well."² The theology of the Atonement in the Psalms is at one with that of St. John and of St. Augustine.

II. The predictive words of Jesus, as recorded by the evangelists, not only confirm His truth and evince His foreknowledge, at least for those who receive the Gospels. They throw light (1) upon the nature of His mission, and (2) upon the mystery of His sacrifice.

1. As to Christ's mission.

The Church has heard much in the last half-century of the conviction of that mission, and of death as its inevitable crown and completion, suddenly opening upon the Saviour,

¹ בָּאֵת (βάιω, LXX.). "This word, 'I come,' was, as it were, the Lord's watchword and symbol." (Bengel, "Gnom.," Heb. x. 7.) How true this is may be seen by Matt. v. 17 ; x. 34, 35 ; xx. 28 ; Mark i. 38 ; Luke v. 32 ; ix. 56 ; xii. 49 ; xix. 10 (1 Tim. i. 15) ; John v. 43 ; viii. 14, 42 ; 1 John v. 10.

² "Non mors, sed voluntas bene morientis placuit." (St. Bernard. Opp., Tom. i. 655). "That which was well pleasing was not the death as such, but the willingness of One who died so well." I venture to refer to "The Witness of the Psalms," pp. 243, 245 (3rd edit.).

or gradually dawning before Him as the days went on and the opposition grew in hatred and intensity. The most remarkable anti-Christian construction of the life of Jesus in the last quarter of a century represents Him as a bright and joyous Teacher among the lilies or by the waters of Galilee, changed into a sombre giant by the disenchantment of life, by the sure disappointment which waits every man who has a message burning within him for which he expects universal acceptance.

Unquestionably it is so with other instruments in God's hand. There is for them, indeed, a "divinity which shapes their ends;" but the previous "rough-hewing," when it can be traced, shows decisively that the ultimate divine shape was but dimly foreseen. In some cases the life-work flashes out before the worker in the twinkling of an eye. Then, no doubt, nothing daunts the man who has seen, if only for a moment, the goal which he is to reach before his career closes. Newman sick, apparently unto death, in Sicily, knows that he must recover; he has work to do in England. Sometimes, again, the revelation comes very slowly and gradually—so softly as to be scarcely a surprise.

Instances of both these cases may be found in Scripture. Moses had a double preparation in the circumstances of his life. In Pharaoh's court, through the wise education of Egyptian learning, he slowly acquired the stateliness that beseemed a leader, the wisdom which suited a lawgiver. In the wilderness, under the clear vault of the starry sky, he learned the lore of saints, the secret way of communing with God. Yet, when brought face to face with his destined work, he is staggered, and shrinks back from it. It is too high and severe for him. "Who am I, that I should bring

forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?"¹ The timid peasant Gideon, "threshing wheat by the winepress to hide it from the Midianites," is hailed by a sudden voice from heaven as "thou mighty man of valour;"² and becomes, almost in a moment, that which he was called to be.

He whom the Father sent into the world cannot—if the evangelists are to be our guides—be ranged among the representatives of either of these classes of God's instruments. His was not a sudden inspiration at any given moment of His career. Neither was it a slowly ripening conclusion. We must recognize it through the whole record. It was with Him an abiding conviction that the Temple was to be destroyed by ruthless hands; that the Son of man was destined to fulfil the type of the unlifted serpent; that He was to be given up by a traitor's baseness, and to die a shameful and painful death. We have all heard stories about brave soldiers who, perhaps months before a great action, perhaps a few days previously, were fully impressed with the conviction that their death in battle was an absolute certainty, and who have written their last farewell before a shot was fired. But these expectations are often belied by the event; we hear of the anticipations which are fulfilled, not of the more numerous cases where it is but a brave man's fancy as he thinks of losing what he holds so dear. The assurance of Jesus about His death was different. There was a regiment under Napoleon in which the name of a private soldier who behaved with splendid bravery, and fell in action, was kept upon the roll of the division. At roll-call it was the first name read out, and the soldier next in order always answered, "Dead upon the field of battle." To conceive a parallel to our Lord, we must

¹ Exod. iii, 11.

² Judg. vi. 11-18.

imagine the soldier present, and hearing the call and the answer to it.

2. This, as has been said, throws light upon the sacrifice of Calvary.

Willing self-sacrifice consecrated His whole life. A well-known picture represents the Carpenter in His Syrian cabin. As He rests after His work upon the beam, the light throws His shadow like that of one extended upon a cross. But this aspect must have been lent not accidentally, by a caprice of sunshine and of shadow, to one moment of His earthly life, but constantly and essentially. What suggestions must there have been in the typical sacrifices! What histories rather than hints in the prophecies! Often must He have beheld a martyr-image in that crape-hung mirror, which presented to Him His own features. In the pathetic light of the setting sun near Edinburgh, two friends looked at the crane over a quarry. Bare, solemn, spectral, it stood out against the sky. In a low voice each said to the other solemnly, "Calvary!" How many such types and images must He have seen in earth and heaven!

This perfect willingness He Himself dwells upon as vital and essential in His sacrifice, inseparable from its efficacy. Listen to His own words. "The good Shepherd giveth His life for the sheep. . . . I lay down My life for the sheep. . . . Therefore doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My life, that I may take it again. No man taketh it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment I have received of My Father."¹ Well says Bengel, "His life was one constant going to death."²

¹ John x. 11, 15, 17, 18. ² "Vita ejus perpetua itio in mortem."

How touchingly is this indicated in His arrest! We see in St. John's narrative the excited band, the torches and lanterns flashing through glade and thicket. "The band and the captain and officers of the Jews took Jesus, and bound Him."¹

Was it want of power which caused His submission to that unjust arrest? All that we have read of moral ascendancy; of the superiority exercised by one great soul over masses of men—of St. Leo, of Marius, of Gordon—is nothing to that meek triumph. A panic seizes the soldiers of the cohort; they feel that they do wrong in showing violence to that which is so majestical. "As soon as He had said unto them, I am He, they went backward, and fell to the ground." It was no want of power.

Was it want of knowledge—the vague hope of escape or deliverance? Nay, all the tragedy was anticipated—the long sullen obstinacy of the caricature; the scarlet robe; the dreadful circlet of the acanthus-crown; the Eli-cry.

And every incident of the death itself is perfectly consistent with this willing submission to it.

Death for the bravest is a tyrant, the king of terrors. In days when the freshness of description was not yet overdone, and men could work from nature without feeling that they were commonplace, Chaucer, drawing with keen eye from death itself, writes of a dying man—

"When from his face up to his feet was come
The cold of death that had him *overcome*."

Another, who has been poisoned, is made by Shakespeare to say—

"The potent poison
Quite *o'ercurrow* my spirit."

¹ John xviii. 12.

But with Him who dies upon Calvary there is no “over-crowding,” no “overcoming.” No expression is used in the Gospels inconsistent with voluntary demission of life.¹ One fact recorded by the two first evangelists is often overlooked. Jesus at the last moment “cried with a loud voice.”² It happened to me to watch by a dying man in the south of France. Towards midday the sea moaned upon the beach, and some strange shudder passed through the pines. At last a light not of the southern sunshine fell upon the face of a man still in the prime of life. It was a gleam of returning consciousness. Some purpose was at work within, and he wished to send some last message back to the shore from which he felt that he was drifting for ever. With a strength that seemed preternatural, he half raised himself on his pillow, and appeared as if he were preparing to stand upright. Then he shook his head, and seemed about to speak. But the voice was hoarse, faint, and hollow, and he fell back dead, with his secret untold. But here! The Roman centurion must often have seen men die, but never like that. In all succeeding ages, no such shout of victory ever rose, when the smoke of battle drifted from along the lines, and the soldiers gazed upon the splendour of their triumph. In the plenitude of a recovered strength, in the fulness of peace, with the capacities of life and victory, the Prince of Peace “cried with a loud voice, and gave up the ghost.” No wonder that the centurion who saw Him so die, and heard Him so cry out, said—“truly this Man was the Son of God.” Of all the millions who have passed away, He alone “poured out His soul unto death.”

¹ ἀφῆκεν τὸ πνεῦμα (Matt. xxvii. 50); ἐξέπνευσε (Mark xv. 37; so Luke xxiii. 46); παρέδωκεν τὸ πνεῦμα (John xix. 30).

² Matt. xxvii. 50; Mark xv. 37.

And from this thought it is that light streams upon the cross. "The Prometheus of Christendom!" But our Prometheus was not fettered fast by force and necessity, but by loving will. Men ask—"is it not all unjust? Does it not represent God as indifferent whether He punishes the innocent or the guilty? Explain, O preacher!" Explain! I cannot. I only know that it is but the chief instance of that law of vicarious suffering, of deliverance at the cost of others, which is at work in human society. The husband or child is purified through the wife's endurance, through the parents' anguish. Peace and deliverance come through wounds and blood; truth triumphs through the anguish of martyrs. I cannot explain the philosophy of the Atonement. I mislike the expression. "How, or in what particular way, Christ's death was efficacious, there are not wanting persons who have endeavoured to explain; but I do not find that Scripture has explained it."¹ That simple sentence is one of the deepest in theology.

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"I cannot understand the woe
Which Thou wert pleased to bear,
O dying Lamb! I only know,
That all my hope is there."

That is our wisest hymn before the cross. Only let this be said—It is *easier* to defend the Atonement from injustice than instances of the law of help through mediation in natural society. There the sufferers are generally unwilling; but Christ was willing. The record of the evangelist down to some of its minutest particulars; the whole sum of the words of Christ about His sacrifice, is contained in the single phrase—"offered Himself to God."

¹ Bishop Butler. "Analogy." Pt. ii. ch. v.

THE FORGIVENESS OF THE
CROSS.

SERMON III.¹

THE FORGIVENESS OF THE CROSS.

THE FIRST WORD FROM THE CROSS.

“ Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.”—LUKE xxiii. 34.

AT what point of the Passion was the first of the last words from the cross spoken? Which is the first of the “seven living leaves put forth by our Vine” upon the tree, as St. Bernard has said?

Four soldiers formed a guard who planted the cross,²

¹ Preached in Derry Cathedral, First Sunday in Lent, 1888.

² Some points of interest in regard to the cross may here be noted:—

(1) The cross is spoken of sometimes in the New Testament and in early writers as “the wood,” “the tree” (*τὸ ξύλον*). In the LXX. version of the Old Testament, the words “crucified” and “tree” are found together in one verse: “Behold the *gallows* (*ξύλον*); hang him thereon (*σταυρωθήτω ἐπ’ αὐτοῦ*).” (Esth. vii. 9.) The early Christians saw in this a representation of Satan plotting the death of Christ by crucifixion, yet smitten to death and overcome by the very gibbet which by his agency was set up for Christ. (2) The industry and learning of Bynceus has collected all that antiquity tells us about the cross. It would seem that there were three crucifixion figures—one the X, known as the St. Andrew’s cross; one the Tau cross, in the form of the Greek capital T, adopted in the Scandinavian Churches; one, and the most usual, like a mast with cross-yards. It consisted of three pieces: the upright stem, the cross stem, and a small projecting rest or straddle. The cross ordinarily was not more than three or four feet high, but in

and made all the ghastly preparations. They rudely stripped Him, laid Him on the wood, and then drew it up with Him fastened to it. His hands were nailed to the cross-beam, His feet nailed and tied. His body rested with some support on a peg or straddle, which prevented the hands and feet from being so completely rent and torn by the weight of their burden that the condemned might be in danger of falling off to the ground. The title of the accusation was fixed over His head. Worst insult of all to that gentlest and loftiest soul—"they crucified Him and the malefactors, one on the right hand and the other on the left!" He hangs there as the representative of fanaticism associated with crime.

Just at this point, almost with the first falling of the blood-drops upon the dust of Golgotha, Jesus said, "Father, forgive them ; for they know not what they do."

I. Let it be most carefully noted that there is one thing which is *not* said here, nor anywhere else, by the Saviour.

One prayer has ever been upon the lips of dying saints. With the severe light of eternity full upon their souls, they have always seen the infinite distance between themselves and the perfect purity of the Law of God. They cry—"forgive me ; pardon, O my God, pardon!" Sins revive in the dim perspective of memory. In the case of one

cases of special guilt a considerably higher elevation was supposed to indicate a peculiar crime and an exceptional punishment. This would probably be the case with one who suffered along with others, whose death it was considered desirable to emphasize. That our Lord's cross was higher than usual would seem to be indicated by the incident of the sponge wrapped round the hyssop stalk, and when steeped in vinegar, lifted to His mouth, as well as by the magnificent irony of the prophetic declaration—"I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Myself." (John xix. 29 ; xii. 32.)

with the lofty ideal of duty and holiness possessed by Jesus, the least mote or speck of imperfection would have blackened all the raiment of moral righteousness which was as white as snow—would have filled His heart and memory with a sense of intolerable discord. Neither on the cross or elsewhere did Jesus ever utter one half-sigh of penitence; never did He once associate Himself with sinners; never accuse Himself of a duty unfulfilled, of an opportunity wasted, of a thought uninfluenced by righteousness, of an aspiration that fell short of heaven. He might, and He did, pray for the pardon of others; He neither did, nor could, pray for His own forgiveness.

II. We should never forget that we are here taught, in the first place, the simple and primary duty of forgiveness of injuries.

1. In the Sermon on the Mount our Lord had filled up the comparatively imperfect outlines of the picture of love drawn by the Law. “Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you.”¹ What He enjoined on those who would be His disciples He does Himself.

That sweet lesson of forgiveness we want. It seems to be quite lost sight of that our Lord is almost more exacting, if that were possible, in relation to forgiveness than in relation to purity. Few of us, perhaps, have really very much to forgive. An unkind letter, an implied taunt, a social slight, some worry, real or fancied, about money—that is generally all *we* have to pardon. We should ponder

¹ Matt. v. 43, 44.

what possibilities of forgiveness there are in the Christian life from the first word of the dying Lord. All is included in St. Paul's loving exhortation—"forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake forgave you."¹

2. But behind the first of the sentences from the cross there is also a dogma, and a vital dogma. We may read in it the *ground* of the pardon which was asked, and the *limitation* by which it was conditioned.

The ground of it is in the true Sonship of Jesus. The first and last of the seven words are recorded by St. Luke alone. Each contains an appeal to God as His Father.

| Our reconciliation to God is in the Sonship of Jesus Christ.

3. But further. In the first word—a prayer for pardon, uttered at the very beginning of the crucifixion—we cannot fail to perceive an implied reference to the sacrifice which was just begun, to the blood just trickling down and reddening the dust of Golgotha. Truly we are brought very near in spirit "to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel." The naked King, whose raiment is parted, for which the soldiers gamble, casting lots beneath the cross—who possesses not a thread of the trappings of royalty, or even of the vesture that covers our shivering humanity—"weaves for Himself" out of His Passion "the purple robe" of which Christians in earlier days loved to speak. Thus, in the proclaimed Sonship of Jesus, and in the beginning of the long predestined sacrifice carried on into fact in the domain of history, the ground of pardon is laid. He asks for forgiveness who has now the right to claim it.

To the forgiveness here asked for, a limit is affixed. Who come within the scope of this word, within the embrace

¹ Eph. iv. 32.

of this appeal? It would seem as if this were purposely left indefinite. We have not any hint given (but one) how far we are to circumscribe the purpose of the intercession.

This prayer, then, must certainly include the *executioners*. The four Roman soldiers who were told off to superintend this sanguinary work, who were but the instruments through which the iron discipline of the Roman legion worked its tremendous mechanism—how can they come under our condemnation for an obedience which had become one of the nobler instincts of their life?

Nor would even the *chiefs* and *rulers* of the Jews lie outside the circle of the benediction. Apostles seem anxious, so to speak, to leave this impression on record, perhaps not without reference to this prayer from the cross. “And now, brethren, I wot that *through ignorance* ye did it, as did also your rulers,” is St. Peter’s frank acknowledgment.¹ “The hidden wisdom which God ordained before the world unto our glory, which none of the princes of the world knew,” exclaims St. Paul, with a yet wider charity—“for had they *known* it, they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory.”²

But we may, and we must, make these words still more amply inclusive.

All human sin leads up to the cross. “This word,” it has been said, “has two arms; with one it embraces all the past, with the other all the future.”

It has been argued that in all sin there is an element of ignorance; that this prayer is, therefore, the charter of universalism—the assurance that all sin will be remitted, and every sinner forgiven. But this conclusion is not warranted. The “for” in this first word has substantially the same signification as “if.” “If, and so far as, they know

¹ Acts iii. 17.

² 1 Cor. ii. 8.

not what they do, forgive them." There may be, as some one has said, a grain of ignorance in every ounce of sin. Yet sin is not merely a severer term for ignorance. No doubt ignorance lessens the guilt of sin. It subtracts from the *quantum* of presumption, of *high-handedness*, which sin contains. This is the view of St. Paul: "before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief."¹ But if ignorance and sin were convertible terms, the same thing seen from different sides, the rest of this prayer of Jesus would be absolutely superfluous, a spiritual utterance of the most unmeaning kind. If ignorance quite obliterates the guilt of sin, and if the sinner can always say boldly, "I knew not"—then there would have been no need for this intercession of the Mediator. But, at the same time, if ignorance did not mitigate guilt, He never would have used the plea. "Ignorance," says an old writer, "does not deserve, but often finds pardon."

We have here considered the first of the seven last words of the dying Saviour from the cross. "Mercy," cries Augustine, "mercy prayed, that misery might pray; the Physician prayed, that the sick might pray; the Judge prayed, that the guilty might pray." In the depths of that word we have seen at once duty and the dogma of the Atonement; the crown of His life on earth, and the image of His work in heaven.

¹ 1 Tim. i. 13.

THE ABSOLUTION OF THE
CROSS.

SERMON IV.¹

THE ABSOLUTION OF THE CROSS.

THE SECOND WORD FROM THE CROSS.

"And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise."—LUKE xxiii. 42, 43.

LET us note well the circumstances here. The thieves were national insurgents. At first it would seem that both joined in reviling the dying Jesus.² Strong in evil as such men commonly are, one was the harder and bolder villain—the "evil genius" of the other. A Christ of earth was the only Messiah for whom he was willing to fight or die. The other was a man of higher and softer mould. He had heard something of the gentle Galilæan, with His works of love. He had seen part of the drama of the Passion in its earliest scenes. The dignity and patience, supreme and ineffable: the first words, even at the moment when He was being fastened to the tree ("Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do!") went to his heart. At first, custom makes him join in the revilings of his companion.

¹ Preached in Derry Cathedral, Second Sunday in Lent, 1888.

² Matt. xxvii. 44, "The thieves also . . . cast the same in His teeth." So St. Mark: "They that were crucified with Him reviled Him" (xv. 32).

But better influences are at work; repentance ripens quickly in the soil of the Cross. He confesses—"we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds." He shows the truest concern for his sinful friend—"dost not thou fear God?" He makes his own act of faith as he prays—"Jesus! remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom."

Let us note, first, that we have in the record of this word one of the characteristics of St. Luke's Gospel.

In other parts, the third Gospel is the Gospel of the beauty of the Redeemer's life. It is the Gospel of the holy angels; the Gospel of ecstatic song and liturgic chant, heavenly and earthly; the Gospel of woman in the presence of Jesus. No woman in that representation is hostile to Jesus. That saddest sight was reserved for later times.

Above all, St. Luke's is the Pauline Gospel, the Gospel of triumphant grace, of abounding forgiveness. The same writer, by old tradition called a painter, has given the most exquisite picture of woman's passionate penitence,¹ and the most complete picture of man's sterner and more restrained penitence. The first is drawn in soft and coloured lines; the other cut as if by a diamond point on a plate of steel.

If the first word from the cross be the priestly, this is the kingly word. Consider the *assurance*, the *promise*, the *revelation*, in it.

I. The *assurance*. "Amen² I say to thee." Here we

¹ Luke vii. 36-50.

² I venture to cite the following sentences:—"This at once enables us to perceive the meaning of the 'Amen' so often used in the Gospels. The double 'Amen' occurs as the prelude to sentences of Christ twenty-five times in St. John's Gospel alone. The single 'Amen' occurs about thirty times in St. Matthew. It is half assertive, half liturgical. To those simple men as they rocked with Him in the boat,

have the old style of the lake and of the guest-chamber. There is absolute certainty in it. In intellectual society there are "autocrats" of the table and of the *salon*. They are soon overthrown ; and we find that there is nothing of permanent royalty in them ; they are mere temporary presidents of republics of small-talk. These speculative dictators are in the habit of announcing, "I *think*." The harder-headed logician draws out his syllogisms, and writes down, "I *conclude*," or "I *infer*." The scholar ransacks manuscripts and volumes, and pronounces magisterially, "I *read*." But it is too plain that students may wander restlessly through libraries, as idle people stroll through a busy city, and be dissipated among their books, even though they be books of theology. There are persons of whom we are peculiarly sure that they have really nothing to say, who begin sentence after sentence with "I *say*." But Christ's especial utterance is not "I *think*," "I *infer*," "I *read*," not even "I *say*," but "Amen I *say*." In His utterances we make an act of faith, because we believe in Him.

This second word, then, has about it the characteristic utterance of the King of Truth.

II. The *promise* in this word is twofold.

First, it is a gracious promise of the abridgment of suffering.

There are instances of unquestionable authenticity to be in the long golden hush of the summer evenings by the lake of Galilee, came His 'Amen.' It was like the hymn of their nursery, and the chant of their synagogue. It was also the expression of *certainty*. It told them of that upon which they could lean unhesitatingly ; of the resolution of their simple doubts ; of a fixed heaven over the fleeting waters of human opinion. 'These things saith the Amen.' (Apoc. iii. 14.) It is a name of Christ ; but it is so only for those who know one characteristic of His teaching—its absolute, unhesitating self-assertion.' "The Great Question, and Other Sermons," p. 50, 2nd edit.)

found in the pages of writers who lived when the Roman cross was planted on the same soil with the Roman eagles, which show that men might live for many hours, possibly for two days, upon the cross. The position, of course, was agonizing ; the tension fearful ; the cramps constant. Yet, belonging to a class of men who are generally physically strong, such a man might go on for weary hours, even while the sun set once and again, shaking the cross with his throes. Here there is an absolute promise of death within the day, before sunset.

But again, “ He who is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think,” gives this dying penitent something better than was implied in that which he had requested.

The man had only asked for recollection in a probably distant future—“ when Thou comest in Thy kingdom.” He hoped that in that great day of the manifestation of the true Messianic royalty, the King of Israel in His glory might deign to revert to His humble companion in the dishonour of the punishment of Calvary. What an answer is accorded to him ! Not merely was it a contingency—a possibility of which he need not despair—“ Amen, I say unto thee.” This hope, faint in his dying heart, but dearer than life, was not relegated to the dim future of distant ages. The very moment was big and thrilling with its presence—“ to-day !” The convert of a few minutes should not be lost in the surging myriads of the redeemed. He should be close to the presence of the King—all his guilt pardoned, all his hardness softened, all his ignorance changed into the fulness of light. He should have in a special degree the highest privilege promised to the most faithful of the servants of the King—“ *with Me.*” What is that but the

fulfilment of the sweetest of all prophecies?—"where I am, there shall also My servant be." "That where I am, there ye may be also."¹

But in this second word from the cross there is also a *revelation*—"in Paradise."² When speaking of departed friends, we constantly say "in heaven." To say that this is *false* would be a heartless exaggeration. It is not false, but *inaccurate*. The park is not the palace, but it is the precinct of the palace.³ The word Paradise (Eden) is associated with softness, greenery, rest, coolness, refreshment. "In Paradise are fairer trees than on Golgotha."

Have we not reason to pray, in the presence of this second word from the cross,⁴ that He who spoke it would pardon the Sadduceeism of our hearts; our little belief in this revelation for ourselves or for others; our little hallowed curiosity about the hereafter? The "majority" is ever increasing on that other shore to which we are daily growing nearer. O the stillness round our noisy years! O the preciousness of the hope which enfolds the deal in Christ, ever since the dying Lord said to the dying penitent, "*to-day—in Paradise!*" To sum up the whole verse with Bossuet: "'To-day'—what speed! 'In Paradise'—what rest! 'With Me'—what companionship!"

¹ John xii. 26; xiv. 3.

² "Paradise" is the translation in the LXX. of the "Gan Eden"—Garden of Eden.

³ It has been supposed that an objection to this doctrine of Paradise is presented by St. Paul's language—"caught up even to the third heaven—caught up into Paradise,"—as if Paradise and the third heaven were identical (2 Cor. xii. 2-4). But "*even to*" (*έως τρίτου οὐπανοῦ*) denotes the *future*, "*into*" (*εἰς τὸν παραστατόν*) the *present*, condition of the saints.

⁴ St. Fulgentius has called the second word "the testament of Christ written with the pen of the cross."

III. I now conclude with two reflections:—

1. There is something in these thoughts which requires to be guarded against abuse. Let us beware of turning the very lavishness of our Lord's generosity into a weapon against His holy Law. "Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid."

There is deep truth in the old familiar saying about the repentance of death-beds—"in all Scripture one, that no man may despair; one only, that no man may presume." We read some months since of a wild leap from an express train going at full speed, and a desperate escape by the man's being landed on a parapet of a bridge. Who in his senses would follow such an example? "And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on Him, saying, Art not Thou the Christ? save Thyself and us. But the other answered, and rebuking him, said, Dost thou not even fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this Man hath done nothing amiss. And he said, Jesus, remember me when Thou comest in Thy kingdom."¹

Take all this together, and we find the germ of faith, hope, charity, humility. Give such a germ time to bud, and, under favourable circumstances, it will unfold itself into the rose. Give to such a penitent time to live the life of faith lodged within him, and he will be that wonder of the new creation—a saint. The repentance, so seldom found on a soft bed, is matured with divine rapidity on the hard bed of the cross. Those old writers scarcely exaggerated who affirmed that the case of the penitent thief exceeds in wondrousness that of Magdalene or of Paul.

¹ Luke xxiii. 39-42.

2. Above all, both the Church and individual Christians should learn to believe in grace—the free gift of God to sinners through Jesus Christ His Son.

What was the source of the thief's pardon? Strange surmises have arisen in times of ignorance. The author of the Arab Gospel of the Infancy tells his poor wild story how, when the Holy Family was in Egypt in some dangerous place, two brigands sprang upon the little cavalcade; how one of the two, awed by the awful purity of the Mother, and by the light of hidden Godhead smiling "in the bright features of the Blessed Child," protected the wayfarers; how the Babe foretold His Passion, and the repentance upon the cross of the good thief. The Middle Ages fabled that the Blessed Virgin stood in the middle between this robber and Christ, obtained grace from Him, and proposed Christ crucified in fact to the dying man, as the crucifix is held up to people in their last agony. One of later date preached that as the shadow of Peter healed certain of their infirmities, so the shadow of Christ on the cross, when the sun came to a certain point, touched this man, and converted his soul. No! the cause was the efficacy and freedom of grace.

Theologically speaking, grace, no doubt, in the last analysis, is not irresistible. He who stands knocking at the door of the heart does not ungently force His way in, but waits for us to open. An early writer says with justice, "on the cross, the nails had fastened the hands and feet. In that supreme suffering nothing remained free. Yes! something: heart and tongue. By the gracious inspiration of God the dying thief presented to God all in him that was free, so that with the heart he believed unto righteousness, and with the mouth made confession unto salvation."

Do we believe in the influence of one human will over another? Can we doubt that a spell of fascination is capable of being exercised by one human being over another, even at a distance? If we believe that there is a Personal God, why should we doubt the fact of grace? for grace is the magnetism of heaven.

Of later years, we have had many tracts upon death-bed repentance. That upon this subject which at one time was nearly the most popular in England was the (not quite satisfactory) narrative of the notorious Earl of Rochester's last days, by Dr. Gilbert Burnet, Bishop of Salisbury. Stories of this class in our own time are briefer, and the heroes and heroines of humbler rank. Some of these narratives are deeply pathetic, yet they do not always convey the impression of being simple and unsensational. And unquestionably the writers of the New Testament do seem to have a horror of what are known as "death-bed scenes." Are there any but two to which any prominence is given—the penitent thief's and the martyr Stephen's?

Now, undoubtedly, there is, in the whole incident which we have been considering, something almost alien from—apparently almost inconsistent with—the view of the Christian life taken by the Church. What is the Church's aim? What her view of the spiritual life?

It is drawn in strong, clear lines in her Prayer-book. It starts from Holy Baptism; it is founded upon the Gospel in the Baptismal Office. Like that tender Scripture, it tells us of a gift—of a *real* and *impartial* gift. Like that it teaches, not that the child must become a man, or like a man, but that the man must become a child, or like a child. Follow on. The baptized is strengthened in Confirmation, fed in Holy Communion, follows Christ's footsteps round

the circling year. Marriage, sickness, death, burial, are all in Christ. This is the common expression of the lives of God's children ; this the ideal of the Church ; this the conception of the Prayer-book. Not only is this the conception of the Church—read the Fauline Epistles : is not this the view which they give of the Christian life? Each separate soul imitates Christ's progress, as each bird of the vast throng that makes westward follows each strange and graceful evolution of the leader bird. Is it in His birth? "until Christ be formed in you ;" His circumcision? "putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ ;" His baptism? "buried with Him by baptism unto death ;" His death? "ye died ;" His resurrection? "risen again with Christ ;" His very ascension? "raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." Paul's ideal is the image of a soul seen in the dust of death, loved, pardoned, quickened, robed, throned, crowned ; not smirched and soiled. Or take the image of Christian life given us in that mirror of a soul, St. John's First Epistle. How does the penitent thief fit into that calm contexture of progressive holiness for any who have once believed? The very word "repentance" is non-existent in that Epistle.

Yet the Church, if it is to be fitted for our weak humanity, must not only be a home for saints ; it must have a porch for the penitent, for backsliders, for those who have relapsed. It must be a hospital for restoration. Preach regeneration alone, and you will have an icy Church ; preach conversion alone, and you will have a fluid Church ; but preach both one and the other, and you will meet the wants of all classes whom the Church includes.

Certainly, ever since Jesus pardoned the dying thief,

the Church has believed in pardoning grace—has believed that this incident has its perpetual lesson even for those who have believed and been baptized. The Church sends to the jail, the scaffold, the penitentiary. Let the worst be stricken with the sense of sin, and Christian men and women will tell him of One who abundantly pardons. The tide of grace breaks bright and broad. We can never say—“There is a point where the tide can never wash, and the wave never reach; a heart that can never be softened by love, or baptized afresh with grace.” And holding this with all our heart, we must at the same time never forget that the function of the Church is not to send forth thieves, however penitent, but to work under God in creating saints, however imperfect.

THE LEGACY OF THE CROSS.

7

SERMON V.¹

THE LEGACY OF THE CROSS.

THE THIRD WORD FROM THE CROSS.

“When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple standing by whom He loved, He saith unto His mother, Woman, behold thy son. Then saith He to the disciple, Behold thy mother.”—JOHN xix. 26, 27.

THE narrative of St. Luke tells us that during a considerable portion of the Saviour’s Passion “all His acquaintance, and the women that followed Him from Galilee, stood afar off, beholding these things.”² After now nearly three hours of awful endurance, there was a lull in the strong excitement of those who hated Him. It was felt by some of those who were dearest to Him that a possibility of approach was afforded. John and a little group of believing women—Mary the mother of Jesus, and two other Marys, the wife of Cleophas and Mary of Magdala—then for a while stood in close proximity beside the cross of Jesus.³ In Gethsemane,

¹ Preached in Derry Cathedral, Third Sunday in Lent, 1888.

² Luke xxiii. 49.

³ Παρὰ τῷ σταυρῷ. This preposition is used of *place*, with the dative of the thing, in this passage of the New Testament only. It is worth noting that the particles μὲν, δέ (Οἱ μὲν οὖν στρατιῶται ταῦτα ἐποίησαν—ver. 24; εἰστήκεισαν δὲ—ver. 25) imply a subtle but most

as earth's poor sympathy is withdrawn from the agonizing Saviour, an angel comes nigh to strengthen Him. He who took not on Him the nature of angels must have felt now that there was something which was still sweeter to Him in the sympathy of human love.

The two first words from the cross—"Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do," and "to-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise"—are, the first priestly, the second royal. This third word expresses the true human affection of the very Man, the Son of Man.

I. Let no refined ingenuity of current criticism ro's us of the assurance that we have here a genuine saying of Jesus.

It has been said that while the whole incident is eloquent of the personality of the evangelist, its record is a condemnation of his veracity. He is consumed with a passion for getting himself personal consideration and making himself of importance. As a matter of fact, John does certainly appear to have taken home and (so to speak) adopted the mother of Jesus. The high consideration which Mary enjoyed in the nascent Church no doubt led the evangelist to give out that Jesus, whose favourite disciple he was always claiming to be, had, when dying, commended to such a friend that which He held most dear on earth. The presence in John's home of this precious legacy of affection assured him of a sort of presidency over the other apostles, and stamped his doctrine with a seal of the highest authority.¹

touching contrast between the callous cruelty of the soldiers and the tender, fearless love of John and the three Marys. Let the reader note also the delicate refinement of the evangelist in the incidental way in which his own presence is indicated after that of the rest of the group. (Vers. 25, 26.)

¹ Renan, "Vie de Jésus," p. 423.

Much might be said in reply to this elaborate and disgraceful insinuation of that school of "higher criticism" which systematically takes the lowest view of the power of God and of the virtue of man.

One argument is morally sufficient. If ever any writing from a mortal pen was the mirror of a human soul, that writing is the Epistle of St. John. He who truly and deeply loves must truly and deeply hate. Upon a lie and liars the hatred of the apostle was fixed with a terrible persistence. Through all the oracular brevity and lapidary incision of his sentences, we feel his heart thrilling with indignation even still, when he has to speak of a lie, and the tellers or doers of it!¹ Surely, in that awful passage about "the lake that burneth with fire," there is one touch which must have come from the hand of John. In a passage quivering, breathless, hurried with emotion, where the writer enumerates the characteristics of the lost, he runs through his fearful list—"the fearful and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and *all liars!*"²

Yet we are asked to believe that this man of pure, generous, lofty nature—this man with his inextinguishable abomination of lies and liars—himself lies, and lies in reference to the most sacred moment of his Master's death, and lies for a personal object of the meanest and most selfish kind.

But, it is said by the same writer—"perhaps the extreme loftiness of the character of Christ does not agree with such personal tenderness as is manifested in this word from the cross to the mother and the disciple, at a crisis when

¹ See 1 John i. 6; ii. 4, 21, 22; iv. 20, and *passim*.

² Apoc. xxi. 8.

He must have peculiarly felt that He was only living for humanity."

Here, again, the answer is simple, and the appeal to human and moral perceptions..

From the literary affectation of academicians—the prigs of the intellectual world—we may turn to all human beings who have had a mother, and who still have a heart. To such we may say—“you believe that Jesus, your Lord, was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary. Think of Him in His dying hours. Would you feel your ideal of the perfect Manhood realized or marred, if you read that He had put by, or spoken coldly, or spoken nothing to His mother?”

In the most glorious dialogue of Plato, in musical and golden pages which the world has never forgotten, we are told of the meeting in the prison of Socrates with his friends, which was to be succeeded that very day by the long parting. The sacred ship has arrived from Delos, the chains are being struck off, and Socrates is to die forthwith. Xanthippe is sitting by her husband, and holding his child in her arms. History has treated her ill ; and perhaps—if one of two extremes must be chosen—life may, in some aspects, be a happier thing for the wives of certain fools than of certain philosophers. Xanthippe may have had provocations which a great idealistic biographer found it convenient to forget. But at all events she had a woman's heart, a Greek woman's passionate nature. “Socrates !” she cried, “this is the last time that either you will talk with your friends, or they with you.” Then Socrates turned to a friend, and said quietly—“let some one take her home.” She is led home, sobbing wildly as she goes ; and Socrates, relieved of her presence, frigidly begins a disquisition upon

pleasure and pain, suggested by the blended sensations in his limb when the chain was removed—possibly not without bitter sarcasm about the loving, if imperfect, wife who mourned him so bitterly.¹

Which presents the tenderer, the more exquisitely human ideal, Socrates or Christ? Let us thank God that the Saviour's heart of fire is also a heart of flesh.

II. Look at the preciousness of the gifts in the three first of the seven words. Gifts! For from the cross He rained down legacies. No showers were ever so rich in harvests as the red drops of Calvary. In each of those words are abiding and universal, as well as particular and temporary, donations.

“ Father, forgive them ; for they know not what they do ! ” That prayer was not merely for the crucifiers. Those who fastened Him to the tree, and drove in the nails, and, after extending Him on the cross, raised it up and fastened it rudely in the soil, were but representatives of a different and wider guilt. From those white lips the words seemed to rise, float away, and die in the distance. But they have never ceased to waken echoes since that moment. Draw near and gaze. From the midst of His agony, wounded and weary, there is One pleading for each soul amongst us. Does not He who hangs thereon give Himself wholly for us? Was not the pang at His heart, the sorrow in His soul, the darkness round Him, and the tormentors on Him, because He loved us with that eternal love stronger than death, which brought Him down from heaven, nailed Him to the cross, sent Him on through the valley of the shadow of death and its dark waters, after His sheep who were scattered? If we listen, we shall, each one, find that our

¹ “The Dialogues of Plato.” Jowett, vol. i. pp. 403, 404.

name is on His lips, as He speaks the first word from the cross.

"To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise." That word is precious too; it brings the promise and breath of Eden into every sick-room.

Has He, then, no special gifts for those who are nearest to Him? Gifts! He who was so unutterably poor! The very gradation of poverty in the psalmist's prophetic picture of the nakedness upon the cross (the outer "raiment," the inner "vesture")¹ is literally carried out in the fact of history. One cannot help feeling that we are able to surprise a tender, latent touch of St. John's. As we think over the denudation,² and put beside it the great legacy,³ we may believe that there is an intended contrast between the divine poverty of the first and the divine exuberance of the second.

Consider the *temporary* and *particular*, the *lasting* and *larger* gift.

i. The temporary and particular gift has two characteristics.

It was just the right gift.

This passage would certainly seem to imply that Mary had no other son. He, who was so exquisitely delicate in respecting the rights of love, would have wounded that son's heart by leaving a mother—and such a mother—to another. "Having seen His mother, and the disciple standing by whom He loved, He saith unto His mother, Woman, behold thy son. Then saith He to the disciple, Behold thy mother." He gives John to Mary, and Mary to John.

Here there is a temporal provision, an earthly home,

¹ *ἰδρτια . . . χιτῶν.* (John xix. 23 and Ps. xxii. 18.)

² Vers. 23, 24.

³ Ver. 26.

secured to the mother of Jesus. It is an unreal spirituality which affects to think little of making such loving provision as may be in our power for those who are nearest to us in blood and affection. But we cannot doubt that there was more here than food and shelter. There was provision for moral affinities of heart, thought, character, temperament, faith. Jesus gave

“The Virgin-Mother to the virgin-soul’d.”

2. As Jesus gave the right gift, so He gave it at the right moment.

“There were standing by the cross of Jesus His mother, and His mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene.” “Then saith He to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And *from that hour*¹ that disciple took her unto his own home.” Jesus gently and with forethought spares His mother the long seismic darkness which was beginning to gather over the landscape, and the Eli-cry. Simeon had said to Mary long ago—“a sword shall pierce through thine own soul.”² The sword must pierce. But no selfish yearning for sympathy shall cause it to be turned in the wound which it has made.³

¹ ἀπ' ἐκείνης τῆς ὥρας. There is emphasis in this. Nouns defined by the pronoun *ἐκείνως* used as an adjective, have always the article, to call attention to the fact that an individual of a class is marked out. (Winer, “Gr. Gr.” 122.) Thus this hour is singled out from all other hours, and marked as the definite beginning of a new relation between John and Mary.

² Luke ii. 35.

³ “By the cross of Christ stood the holy virgin-mother, upon whom old Simeon’s prophecy was now verified; for now she felt ‘a sword passing through her very soul.’ She stood without clamour, or womanish noises, and silent, and with a modest grief deep as the waters of the abyss, but smooth as the face of a pool; full of love and patience, and sorrow and hope. Now she was put to it to make use of all those excellent discourses her holy Son had used to build up her spirit, and

III. As our Lord bestows in the third word from the cross a *temporary* and *particular* gift, so does He bequeath a *lasting* and *larger* legacy and benediction.

1. An enduring endowment was bestowed upon the Church in reference to the history of the Gospels.

False teaching probably does almost as much harm to the Church by those truths of which it makes good men suspicious, as by those which it actually corrupts or distorts. Superstitious exaggerations bring superstitious fear in the recoil. The real “glories” of Mary are forgotten in the panic produced by the extravagances of Liguori.

The long-continued abiding of Mary with John cannot have been without the most real effect in enabling the evangelist to teach with all confidence the doctrine of the Incarnation. How naturally that he whose home was Mary’s shelter should have written—“the Word became flesh”! How natural that to a Church troubled by sectarians, who proclaimed a commonplace Christ or a shadowy Christ—a Christ of mere humanity or of mist—the fourth evangelist, who was full of thoughts derived from companionship with the mother of Jesus, should have proclaimed with confidence—“every spirit which confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: and every spirit which confesseth not Jesus is not of God.” “Many deceivers are gone forth into the world, even they that confess not that Jesus Christ cometh in the flesh. This is the deceiver and the antichrist.”¹ The human intellect was

fortify it against this day. Now she felt the blessings and strengths of faith, and she passed from the grief of the Passion to the expectation of the Resurrection; and she rested in this death as in a sad remedy, for she knew it reconciled God with all the world.” (Taylor’s “Emplar,” vol. iii. p. 353.)

¹ John i. 14; 1 John iv. 2, 3; 2 John v. 7.

busy then, as it was for centuries afterwards, with the conception which we are to have of the Person of Jesus. All heresies (and in name they are numerous and perplexing) may be referred in themselves or in their consequences to one or other of these two general heads—they either *un-humanize* or *undeify* the God-Man. It is often said that the Bouddha, or the classical demi-god, affords a true counterpart of the mystery of the Incarnation. Those who make the assertion have failed to grasp the true idea of that mystery. Christ is not God masquerading for a time in human form; He is not a man deified. He is God *humanified*. With what marvellous fitness were Mary and John brought into close and constant connection! In Mary, we have the favoured instrument through whom the Incarnation was wrought out. “When the fulness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law.”¹ In John, we have the theologian by whom the conception was defined, so far as it is capable of definition in human language.² The first is the living witness of the fact; the second the providential expositor of the idea.

This assistance must have been of value also for many things recorded both in St. John’s and the other Gospels. Mothers are the best biographers of their children’s earliest years. They have a subtle insight, almost prophetic instincts. Who can doubt that the Annunciation, the birth, the sweet silence of the baby and boy life, form a part of Mary’s contribution to the materials of the authentic Gospels? As we think of the deeply meditative nature of

¹ Gal. iv. 4.

² “He had a name written, that *no man knew, but He Himself*. . . . And His name is called The Word of God.” (Apoc. xix. 12, 13.)

Mary, as we hear him with whom Mary dwelt speaking with such authority and precision of the Person of Christ, we feel that the heart of Mary has not been without influence on the hand of John.

It will not take us far from our subject if we add here two considerations.

1. By many modern unbelievers—and especially by Renan—it has been said that the author of the fourth Gospel moved in a totally different sphere of historical narration from the synoptical evangelists; that he knew nothing of the birth in Bethlehem. For this assertion it is urged that there is something more to be alleged than the evangelist's silence. We have a positive indication that it never occurred to him to couple Jesus with Bethlehem. For he records the objection of certain antagonists—"what! will the Christ come out of Galilee? Hath not the Scripture said that the Christ cometh of the seed of David, and from Bethlehem, the village where David was?"¹ Now, it is part of the tender, subtle irony of St. John to record *objections* of adversaries, which, to thoughtful and instructed Christians, were convincing *arguments*.² The record of the *objection* has for its motive the knowledge of its *futility*. If we believe that the disciple from the cross took the mother of Jesus to his own home, the question is settled.

2. The first vision of the Virgin-Mother extant in ecclesiastical history, may be taken by us from the pages

¹ John vii. 41, 42.

² We have another instance in this very chapter (ver. 35). The apostle who, from Ephesus, wrote to the Christians of Asia Minor and of the world, might well feel a thrill of triumph as he thought how truly his Master had "gone unto the dispersed among the Gentiles, and taught the Gentiles."

of St. Gregory of Nyssa, as abbreviated by an English bishop. "Gregory (called Thaumaturgus from the miracles wrought by him), Bishop of Neo-Cæsarea, in Pontus, was one of the most celebrated among the scholars of Origen. He was appointed to the Episcopal See of his native city, which then contained only seventeen Christians; the rest were heathens. After his consecration to the bishopric he retired for a time, in order to give himself to religious meditation and prayer; especially that he might be able to refute the errors and heresies of the time, and to hold firmly and teach clearly the true faith. When he was thus engaged, he had a vision of a venerable man, who said that he had been sent by God, in answer to his prayers, to declare to him the true faith. A woman of wondrous beauty and dignity of mien accompanied him. The venerable man, as represented in the vision, was St. John the Evangelist; the woman was the blessed Virgin Mary. The former then uttered certain words, in which he delivered a profession of faith which Gregory set down in writing. . . . 'There is one Lord; One only of One only; God of God; impress and image (*εἰκὼν*) of the Godhead; energizing Word; wisdom comprehensive of the system of the universe, and power, the Maker of the whole creation; very Son of very Father; invisible of invisible; incorruptible of incorruptible; immortal of immortal; eternal of eternal.'

"There is a Trinity perfect in glory, and eternity, and kingdom indivisible and unchangeable."¹

It will be observed that in this "vision" Mary is joined with John. How different, it must sorrowfully be added, is this simple and truly catholic creed from the strange words supposed to have been uttered on February 11th,

¹ Bishop Wordsworth. "Church History," pp. 283, 284.

1858, to Bernadotte Soubirous—"I am the Immaculate Conception"!

IV. Let it, lastly, be said that here is something for all who, like John and Mary, follow Jesus lovingly to His cross.

Home! The word has a magic sound. What is best in home, after all? Not the walls and roof, not the plenty and comfort which may be within, not the ivy and roses clinging to the stones—not these, but the living stones, the fibrous tendrils of clinging memories. And what are the associations of a Christian home?¹ The sweet tempers; the mutually adjusted natures; the steps that pace to the same round of daily duties; the associated prayers; the hands raised for the same hallowed bread; the eyes wet with the same sorrows or lit with the same joys; the hills ascended in company, and, as life advances, touched with the same westering sun; the spirits that gaze at once into the same grave, and the same golden spot in the distance. This is Christ's home-gift from the cross to all true hearts that

"soar but never roam,
True to the kindred points of heart and home."

Christ once made a home for Mary and John, while a world hissed and yelled, and the darkness gathered round the cross. And still, over life's roaring sea, across our darkening hours, He tells us of a home of hearts in the City of our God. "In My Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."²

¹ The original (*εἰς τὰ ιδία*, John xix. 27), if not quite literally our word "home," is perhaps its nearest possible equivalent.

² John xiv. 2, 3.

THE DERELICTION OF THE
CROSS.

SERMON VI.¹

THE DERELICTION OF THE CROSS.

THE FOURTH WORD FROM THE CROSS.

“ And when the sixth hour was come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour. And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eloī, Eloī, lama sabachthani? which is, being interpreted, My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?”—MARK xv. 33, 34.

THE fourth word from the cross is probably given by St. Mark in its exact original form.² Let us (1) assure ourselves that the sentence was actually spoken by Jesus; and (2) address ourselves to its interpretation.

I. This word was spoken by our Lord. And this in itself is an absolutely tremendous fact. More tremendous, more incalculable, more soul-subduing, when we reflect that this is the *one only* last word recorded by the two first evangelists. Let us conceive the case of a modern missionary martyr, who lays down his life for the testimony of Jesus. Some of his companions escape, and return to England. A vast assemblage gather to hear of the sufferings whereby the athlete of the faith has won his crown. They seek to know from ear-witnesses how the Son of God

¹ Preached in Berkeley Chapel, Mayfair. Lent, 1889.

² Cf. *Talitha*, Mark v. 41; *Ephphatha*, vii. 34; *Abba*, xiv. 42.

sustained His faithful servant, what message came back from those dying lips, with what last word he has enriched the treasury of the Church. And those who heard the martyr can only give for answer—"the man of God bore himself with a glorious patience, but all he had to say was just this, 'My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?'"

It need scarcely be said that this fearless candour of the evangelist has been cruelly travestied and heartlessly misunderstood. The bolder and coarser schools of unbelief have said out that it was the cry of cowardice. The sentimental school has used it as a *motif* round which they have embroidered their poor romance. The most popular and most voluble of the literary artists who have thus dared to play with Calvary is the author of the fascinatingly written book, so profanely and so fancifully called the "Vie de Jésus"—the work of the theologian who has confessed that his ambition is to have his pages "turned by daintily gloved fingers." "Perhaps" comes in here with a frequency unusual even in that book of guesses. "Perhaps" in that supreme moment He repented giving a life so precious for a race so vile. "Perhaps," as has so often been the case with martyrs and others who sacrifice all they have for an idea, the moment came to Him also, the first of the idealists of humanity, when Death, with the irresistible terror of his icy sarcasm, whispered—"In vain." "Perhaps" He thought of the fountains of Galilee, or of its moonlit waters, of its wild flowers, and the golden joy of its sunny days, and regretted that He had not remained a workman of Nazareth, with a peasant's home and simple pleasures.

But, at all events, it remains *certain* that the fourth word from the cross and the Agony in Gethsemane are *historical*.

Legends, it will be said, falsify. No doubt; but they surround their heroes with splendid exaggerations. Such forms look larger than human on the frozen hills of death. "Being in an agony, He prayed more earnestly; and His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground."¹ A demigod, covered with a sweat of blood, writhing on the ground like a crushed worm! No legend ever decked out its subject in a drapery so strange, or invested him with a beauty so uninviting in the eyes of man. We are reminded that the last words of men who lay hold upon the popular imagination are sometimes invented, sometimes self-moulded. An instance of this has occurred quite lately. Who has forgotten some of the most pathetic sentences in all romance? "Just as the last bell struck, a peculiar sweet smile shone over his face, and he lifted up his head a little, and quickly said 'Adsum!' and fell back. It was the word we used at school when names were called; and lo! he, whose heart was as that of a little child, had answered to his name, and stood in the presence of the Master."² This sentence is placed in a Scottish parish over the remains of the brave officer who was the original from which the great writer drew Colonel Newcome. It is fast becoming a local tradition that the words were really spoken by the fine old soldier in his last moments—which assuredly they never were. But the case is different here. *Who* is represented as falling upon the earth with a sweat of agony, or crying from a cross, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" The paradox of the fervent African becomes applicable here—"I believe it, because it is impossible."

II. Let us now place ourselves at the point of view

¹ Luke xxii. 44.

² Thackeray, "The Newcomes," ch. xlii.

which alone can render this word intelligible, coherent with the character of Christ, almost (one ventures to say) conceivable.

Let us remember, then, to ask ourselves, “Who is He, what is He, who so speaks in His dying hour?” Let us remember, at the same time, that the evangelists have this peculiarity—that they often lay open to us in a single sentence a whole series of precedent conditions. Who is this? we ask. We believe that it is the only Son of God, God from God, Light from Light, who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven, and was crucified under Pontius Pilate. And this word, apparently so hopeless and helpless, is really the word which opens up to every believer in the Atonement the whole series of precedent conditions from which that Atonement flows.

If Christ were short of that which we have just declared Him to be—if He were a transcendent moral teacher, a genius in the spiritual sphere, a man of saintly excellence, and nothing more—then logic would drive us to some such conclusion as this:—

Christ clung to the illusions of His opening career almost to the last. Possibly, He carried them with Him up to and upon the cross. They were with Him up to midday on the fatal Friday. But as the moments passed, and His weakness increased; as the darkness deepened over Calvary, as the lurid sky was inexorably still, and no angel's wing cleft the air, no smile of pity visibly fell upon Him from the Father's face; as He was left to go down to the dust of Golgotha by an ignominious death, crucified with thieves—the very name of one of whom was the caricature of fate upon His career—His courage failed, and He gave Himself up to despair. And however piteous the story, however

cruel and unjust the punishment, it was but another instance of the cynicism of our human history; but another example of the lively or splendid enthusiasm of youth mocked, corroded, ruined, by the failure of manhood.

Thus a Christ who is not the Christ of the Catholic faith, would be discrowned by His own words upon the cross. Thus, too, of all the seven last sayings, this is the one which is the most utterly certain. For who that loved Him, or believed in Him, would have invented it under any circumstances, or indeed would even have recorded it—unless he held the view which we are about to develop?

Take the Christian view of the suffering Son of man; look and listen to St. Matthew and St. Mark as they chronicle the fourth word, and think what we must conclude.

“It was about the sixth hour, and there was a darkness over all the land until the ninth hour, and the sun was darkened.”¹ The darkness was not that of an eclipse, but the precursor of seismic disturbance. It was within three hours of the moment when “the earth did quake, and the rocks rent.”² That darkness, by some preordained harmony, was in sympathy with the anguish of the dying

¹ Luke xxiii. 44, 45.

² Matt. xxvii. 51. “Under the reign of Tiberius, the whole earth, or at least a celebrated province of the Roman Empire, was involved in a preternatural darkness for three hours. Even this miraculous event, which ought to have excited the wonder, the curiosity, and the devotion of mankind, passed without notice in an age of science and history.” (“The Decline and Fall,” ch. xv.) A distinct chapter of Pliny is devoted to *eclipses* of an extraordinary character and unusual duration. But St. Luke’s phrase (xxiii. 45) is the same as that in Apoc. ix. 2—*ἐσκοτίσθη ὁ οὐλμός*, “the sun was darkened”—i.e. obscured and partially concealed by smoke and dust. Modern observation makes us familiar with the fact that a darkening of the sky very frequently precedes earthquakes. (See Dean Milman’s note to his edition of Gibbon, vol. i. pp. 525, 526.)

Lord of heaven and earth. The fierce, prolonged pain of crucifixion, the torn and tormented brow, the anguish, to a nature so exquisite, of human hatred—of being taken for a sanguinary fanatic and associated with crime—tortured that gentle heart, that susceptible organization. Three hours ebbed away as He hung silent in the lurid gloom. Death was fast approaching.

“But why should not the Elect of humanity, the acknowledged King of the spiritual world, have faced that moment with a sweet, untroubled calmness, with a smile of hope and love? Why should He not have been as unbent in manhood as the one Kaiser on his white bed, as the other with his superb self-control?”

There is but one answer, and that is perfectly conclusive.

For one like Jesus death had two conditions:—

1. It was a death which (if we believe prophets and apostles) was constructed, so to speak, to bear the punishment of human sin. “He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him.” “His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree.” “God made Him to be sin for us, Who knew no sin.”¹

The peculiar punishment of sin is nothing outward so much as being abandoned by God. “Ye shall know My alienation,” said God to sinners of old.² What must the feeling of that have been to Him who declares to us the inner secret of His life, when He says—“as the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father!”³

¹ Isa. liii. 5; 1 Pet. ii. 24; 2 Cor. v. 21.

² נִגְרָתָנִי, literally, “my negation, keeping back, standing off.” Numb. xiv. 34; not (as A.V.) “breach of promise,” but *alienatio* or *withdrawal* (R.V.).

³ John vi. 57.

This fourth word from the cross, then, speaks to us of man's sin endured in man's Representative.

2. Once more, that death was a death on behalf of every man.¹

His consciousness was fused into, and made identical with, ours. Our misery was felt by Him, so far as it could be without contamination. The sinking which is the prelude of the last moment ; the falling and fainting away into the deeps : all this was gathered into one focus. The Prince of Life felt death as the death of humanity. There was no dissolution of the hypostatic union, as if He were altogether abandoned by the Person of the Word. But the heart of God felt death in the dying heart of the Son of man, who is the centre of our humanity.

Now this was over. The dereliction melted away in depths of unclouded light. "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me ?" Unbelief, as we have seen, cries— "despair, impatience, ignorance, cowardice." Rather, it is not only the necessary utterance of the atoning death of the incarnate Lord ; it is a proof of the reality of the suffering of His soul. It is a sweet protestation. It points, of course, to past hours of darkness unspeakable. But it leaps to His lips as if with a burst of music, with some far-off accompaniment of triumph. He cried "with a great voice," and it was the cry, the word, which supremely impressed the earliest evangelists. But now it is over, past and gone, lying in the distance—"why *didst* Thou ?"²

III. I will suggest but one practical thought bearing upon the awful mystery of death. I am, on this occasion, speaking especially for the young—and for young people in London, where the circumstances of their lives bring them

¹ Heb. ii. 9.

² ἐγκατέλιπες (ver. 34).

into contact with what is so well known as the “London Season.”

Some may say that this is a peculiarly unsuitable kind of lesson.

Those who are old, or growing old, who know little of fashion but its exterior, have no right to speak bitterly of that with which they are but imperfectly acquainted. It is, of course, no heavy task to aim facile shafts at balls, dinner-parties, receptions, concerts, drawing-rooms, dances, for which the June nights are all too short. “Worldliness” is a word with flexible and wavering outlines when we come to define it. Its line of demarcation is never local, or made of material stuff. It is inside the Church in mist, as well as outside in pomp. The duties which devolve upon the much-abused “designing mothers” are like other duties: they only become mean when they are meanly done. For those among the older to whom the season is supposed to be a period of delightful excitement, it is, sometimes at least, a protracted self-sacrifice, a weary fast of much more than forty days.

But for the young—“rejoice in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment.”¹

This is not, if we understand it rightly, the utterance of an elderly *roué* become a Trappist, or of a sickly valetudinarian with an unwholesome religionism, thinking fiercely upon youth, and hissing out, with a bitter laugh or sneer—“go on, enjoy yourselves if you like, but take the consequences!”—a warning which differs from an anathema

¹ Eccles. xi. 9.

chiefly in its form. The sentence is most truly understood by taking it literally. The best rule for its interpretation is to suppose that a sweet and kindly smile looked down upon the page whereon it was first inscribed.

The preacher who addresses the young of whom we have spoken should surely in substance speak to this effect—

We are, in fact, in different lights : you in the dawn, I in the sunset. I cannot see things in your light, still less can you see them in mine. As I look backward with you, the radiance of my past is dimmed with a mist of tears ; as you look forward with me, the light is too severe, too pathetic, lingering as it does high up on cliffs whose bases are becoming darkened with gathering shadows. Yet at least keep your hearts pure, remembering that “He who was begotten of God keepeth you, and that wicked one toucheth you not.” Every season the dawn fades, and the darkness comes for young souls—perhaps grief, perhaps change of circumstances, perhaps disappointment, perhaps sickness, perhaps the death that comes with a foot of velvet and strikes with a hand of steel.

In a great spiritual manual there is a solemn chapter—“On the withdrawal of all Consolation.” It must have been written under the shadow of the fourth word from the cross by one whom its echoes haunted, whose spirit retranslated it into language more easily understood by sinful man. “He rideth easily whom grace carrieth joyously.” “Do I love Jesus ?” is often asked. At times it is answered in the affirmative, with a facile joy which is superficial. The great picture in “Lear” is full of instruction. The old man asks his daughters—“how much do you love me ?” Two of them heap hyperbole on hyperbole, and

make professions, extravagant no doubt, yet possibly not intentionally quite false. One only says little, almost nothing, knowing that "her heart is richer than her tongue." But which really loved most? Bear witness the scene where the storm rolls over the old disrowned king's white hair upon the heath. Not strength of profession, but tenacity of grasp, will avail you in such hours as we speak of. Above all, strengthen yourselves by contemplating One who (as the fourth word from the cross testifies) knew the trials of feeling as well as the touch of pain. Hold fast by the hand of Him who suffered darkness and death, that He might turn death into life, and darkness into light. Pray ever—

"Abide with me from morn till eve,
For without Thee I cannot live ;
Abide with me when night is nigh,
For without Thee I dare not die."

THE BODILY PAIN OF THE
CROSS.

SERMON VII.¹

THE BODILY PAIN OF THE CROSS.

THE FIFTH WORD FROM THE CROSS.

“I thirst.”—JOHN xix. 28.

ALL who have been sick themselves, or who have been called upon to watch over the sick, know how much the least selfish patient is necessarily absorbed by self and by suffering. This in every case is, of course, a proof of human weakness. The great poet represents the Roman nerving himself for the assassination of Cæsar by calling to mind Cæsar's fever in Spain, when “the tongue that bade the Romans mark him” cried “as a sick girl, Give me some drink, Titinius !”²

In some cases sickness is accompanied by that peculiar irritation of the weak so well known as peevishness. The Scotch master of romance, in a once famous passage,³ describes one who had borne in society for years the reputation of being a stately and courteous gentleman as

¹ Preached in Derry Cathedral on the Fifth Sunday in Lent, 1888 ; and in the Chapel Royal, Whitehall, Hospital Sunday, 1888.

² Cassius, in “Julius Cæsar.” Act i. sc. 2.

³ “Chronicles of the Canongate.” Chapter the First.—“Mr. Croftangry's Account of Himself.”

screaming out reproaches against his gentle niece and her attendant because he himself had broken a tea-cup upon a table which was placed a little too far from him. God forbid that we should forget the marvellous power of sanctifying grace in sustaining the sick children of God. But when one reads anecdotes of the superhuman patience of the sick, one is sometimes tempted to think that the doctor and the nurse might have something more to say if they could be cited as witnesses.

Among the last words of Jesus bodily pain claims one only—the fifth in order, “I thirst!”¹ Let us consider what this word teaches of our Lord’s manhood, of the history of His Passion, and of His character.

I. This fifth word teaches the reality of His bodily pain.

One school of modern spirituality seems to consider it a point of honour to depart from the general feeling of Christians in relation to this. He who knew no sin could not know sickness. But, as no sorrow was like His sorrow, so Christian feeling, the heart of Christendom, has held, not as an article of faith, but as an instinctive sentiment, that no suffering was like His Suffering. And Scripture seems to fall in with this conception. One of the primary points of St. Paul’s witness was, “how that the Christ is subject to suffering.”²

It does not appear to be true reverence to minimize any part of Christ’s suffering. It has become fashionable to argue that the crucified thieves upon Calvary suffered more than the Redeemer. But the lower mental and moral organization, even when the bodily system is stronger,

¹ διψῶ.

² Acts xxvi. 22, R.V. marg. The word is a most remarkable one, *αθητός*, *passible* : one who has suffered or is subject to suffering.

suffers *less*, not *more*, than that which is more spiritual and refined. The Chinese robber or rebel, dying of slow starvation, has been known to laugh and jeer day after day through the bars of his iron cage at the fierce mob which yelled at him. The exquisitely delicate and sensitive nature of our Lord's humanity may be included in the psalmist's words as they are taken up by the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews—"when He cometh into the world, He saith, A body hast thou prepared for Me."¹

After the agony in the garden; after the successive tribunals to which He had been dragged, from Annas to Caiaphas, from Caiaphas to Pilate, from Pilate to Herod, from Herod back again to Pilate; after the mockery by the Jews, by the Roman soldiers, by Herod and his men-of-war; after the scourging by the tremendous Roman lash, stiffened with bone or steel; after the pressure of the crown of acanthus-thorn; after the cramps which came with the terrible tension and rigidity of the position so long continued; after the parting with human love, and the dereliction continued through the sultry darkness for three long hours; after the slow exhaustion from the ebbing away of the drops of blood upon the dust of Golgotha, the raging thirst of crucifixion set in. The Saviour does not dwell upon His sufferings. From those white lips there drops just one word, summing up in itself all the physical suffering which He endured—"I thirst!"

Let us here note that there are two opposite extremes to be avoided by the Church, in teaching of the physical anguish which accompanied the crucifixion of Jesus.

1. The first is that of which travellers tell us in foreign countries.

¹ Ps. xl. 6; Heb. x. 8.

A procession in the south of Spain was described by one who witnessed it on a Good Friday some twenty years ago. It was a hard, cold night in March. The lights carried by the multitude showed wan against the sinking sun and the steel-blue sky. The figure of the Christ was carried in the dim square, nailed to the cross, scarcely lit by the flaring torches. But it could be seen that thin streams of real blood ran down over the livid face and white form.¹ Or we may turn to a widely circulated biography, that of the eloquent Dominican Father Burke. One Friday morning the novice found his preceptor, in the grey light of dawn, in a terrible intensity of prayer, as if half-dead, at the foot of a crucifix, the bare white wall splashed with blood from a whip which lay by his side. It becomes us to speak low and lovingly, in days when martyrdom is looked upon as a form of obstinacy, and self-sacrifice as a form of monomania ; yet we may wish that some one could have come in and tenderly whispered to the devotee—"Who *His own self* bare our sins in *His own body* on the tree . . . by whose stripes" (the original words point to a blue, livid weal) "ye were healed."²

This form of sensationalism is like many others. This materialism may obscure the very sacrifice which it pictures or dramatizes.

2. But much of the thought and feeling round us is at the opposite extreme.

Old expositors of St. John's writings often tell us of the Docetic heretics of the apostle's time. Taking their start from the essential evil of matter, they denied the reality of our Lord's body, of the flesh of Christ. The

¹ Ford's "Untrodden Spain."

² οὐ τῷ μάλαπι αὐτῷ. (I Pet. ii. 24.)

Christ set forth by St. John is not One who left no footprints upon the earth ; who did not really eat and drink ; who had a spectre nailed to the cross in His stead ; who melted away like mist in the illusive pageant of an ascension. He is One who came in the reality of flesh, in the likeness of sinful flesh. As He is not a commonplace Christ, so He is not a shadowy Christ.

Much supercilious criticism on hymns which speak of the blood of Jesus is almost Doketic in essence.

The blood of Christ implies three realities—the reality of His manhood, of His suffering, of His sacrifice. It is dogma made pictorial, passionate, pathetic. This objection to all loving, adoring mention of the “blood of Jesus” is out of touch with St. Paul, who speaks of Christ having “made peace through the blood of His cross ;” out of touch with St. Peter, to whom we owe the tender expression, “the precious blood ;” out of touch with St. John, who announces that “the blood of Jesus keeps cleansing from all sin ;” out of touch with the redeemed, who sing, “Thou hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood.”¹

II. This fifth word from the cross teaches us further that we are contemplating a momentous point in the history of the Passion.

“After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now *finished*, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, saith, “I thirst.” The brightness is beginning ; the victory is already commenced in His soul. We may profitably note in this place the unity of the character of Christ as presented to us by St. Luke in the record of the Temptation with that which is here given by St. John. “In those days He did eat nothing ; and when they were ended He afterwards

¹ Col. i. 14-20 ; 1 Pet. i. 19 ; 1 John i. 7 ; Rev. v. 9.

hungered.”¹ First, in both cases, comes the spiritual struggle; afterwards, in both cases, the conflict with the bodily need. A comparison has been drawn by a great Protestant German writer² between our Lord and some hero who, through all the dust and heat of battle, either does not feel, or does not give expression to, his exhaustion. But when the smoke begins to drift away from the lines, and the long roll of artillery is exchanged for dropping shots, he passes into his tent and calls for drink. Let it be noted that the verb (rendered *accomplished*³ by the A.V. in the twenty-eighth verse) is the same as that translated “it is finished,” the sixth of the last words preserved in the thirtieth verse. The text should be rendered by the same English equivalent in both places, as in the R.V. The two taken together indicate that the victory recognized as begun in thought in the first passage has been won, and is expressed verbally, in the second.

Nor shall we fail to note the attestation which is given to the sacredness of the Old Testament—“Jesus, . . . that the Scripture might be fulfilled.” *That*⁴ does not here denote conscious determination. It is the same word which we find four verses above. “The soldiers said among themselves, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it whose it shall be; *that*⁵ the Scripture might be fulfilled.” The meaning cannot be that the soldiers acted with a *deliberate purpose* of ensuring the accomplishment of Scripture; but with the *result* of its being fulfilled.⁶ In a history of such transcendent significance in the spiritual world, nothing is mean, nothing fortuitous. The Roman guard of four for an

¹ Luke iv. 2; John xix. 28.

² Lange. “Life of Christ.” Vol. iv.

³ τετέλεσται. (Ver. 28).

⁴ ἤντι.

⁵ Ver. 24.

⁶ In the language of criticism—*ἤντι εκβατικός*, not *telic*.

execution was turned out with the usual precision of that faultless military machine. There was the vessel of vinegar (*posca*) for the cheap refreshment of men in a hot country. There was the sponge for cleansing the accoutrements which might be splashed with blood, and the hyssop stalk. If those splendid soldiers had been told that these details of drill and parade were part of a divine chapter in the history of the world, they would have laughed with the rude laughter of the barrack-yard. Yet, according to St. John, these things must be, and *thirst* was part of the martyr-image of Messiah in the mirror of the Psalms.¹

III. But the word from the cross is also a revelation of the *character* of the Sufferer.

1. How truly human He is !

There are three draughts on the cross mentioned. The first is the proffered opiate, refused because He meets death without respite or alleviation. The second is the mock wassail-cup, the caricature of the imperial coronation wine. The third is that on which we meditate.² Jesus complies with the claims of the body—with the duty of seeking refreshment when resistlessly needed. The Stoic sheathes himself in marble. The Indian brave has been known to refuse his enemies the satisfaction of asking from them a little water, when he has been fastened to the stake, ringed round with fire, and his lips black with agony. The Fakir hangs silent on his dreadful hook. Such is the difference between “free self-sacrifice and crazy suicide.”

In our Lord, then, as this word proves, there is no affected superiority to bodily pain or bodily need; He is truly human.

¹ Ps. xxii. 15; lxix. 21.

² Matt. xxvii. 34; Luke xxiii. 36; John xix. 29.

2. But there is something more in it.

What must have been the temptation for a lofty nature at that supreme moment? His friends, John and the three Marys, were no longer near. None but enemies are within hearing. "He will not condescend to appeal to them"—so pride might surmise. No! Peace is being made by the blood of His cross; the work of atonement is all but over; the breath of reconciliation blows upon Him as He hangs there. "I thirst!" is the hint and signal of forgiving love.

In man's nature as it is there are two elements, a *fact* and a *possibility*. The *fact* of man's nature is, that it is fallen. Of this fact Jesus had a terrible knowledge. How could it be otherwise with Him who knew both *man* and *men*: both man in the abstract, and the individual men who came across His path?¹ How could it be otherwise with Him who, starting from the lowest and most abject fatalities of man's physical being,² threw that ray of light upon the other abysmal cloaca of an unrenewed human soul?³ But Jesus also recognized another and loftier element. That ear, which was so keenly sensitive to all the discords of sin, was at the same time the first which ever heard the one chord which was yet capable of keeping time and tune in the harlot's passionate heart. That insight which saw, as never moralist or physiologist of the platform, how in all sensual sin the impulse waxes as the pleasure wanes, saw also that man's nature was capable of an expulsive pleasure of a loftier kind, which might yet win for him the victory. Jesus had a deathless belief in the possibility of man's recovery, in the existence within him of the germs of an undying life. With that belief He inspired His Church. All

¹ "He knew all men. He knew what was in man" (John ii. 24-28).

² Mark vii. 18, 19.

³ Mark vii. 21-23.

Catholic believers hold that there is a real Fall, that we are not "born good," that we are "very far gone from original righteousness." Yet, believing this, the Church speaks her sweet invitation wherever there are men—to the thief, to the harlot, to the savage. As she reads history, she says, "I am human, and nothing human is alien from me." Christians believe in virtue. Contrast with religious historians of the Church that great master of epigrams whom the course of his vast subject brought into contact with the origin of Christianity. *They* can recognize the dignity of truth and goodness wherever it is to be found. *He* may talk of the dignity of human nature, but his spirit is like that of Vivien when she reveals her nature to Merlin. If any man renounces the world, it is, according to Gibbon, because it has become evident that he would not succeed in it. For him the virgin is not so pure, nor the saint so holy; the martyr is not very disinterested, and the doctor is not very learned. He looks along the line of men whose forms rise from the mist of ages. He spouts his vitriol into every eye that is lifted heavenward. He plunges the stiletto of his epigram into every heart which beats for God.

The Master of the Church believed in the recovery of man; and, therefore, in the existence of something recoverable within him. He came to make men more human, to give humanity to man. He appealed to His executioners as men; He gave them credit for the possession of humanity. "I thirst," He said, as though He would remind them—"these hands are nailed; I cannot use them; cannot raise a cup, if I had one, to My lips. I know that there is humanity among you. I thirst!"

It is often overlooked that this word was not without effect. The great cry, just as the dereliction was passing

away at three o'clock, was misunderstood by some of the bystanders. "Behold! He calleth Elias." Then St. Mark, in his vivid way, paints the effect produced upon one of the soldiers. "And one ran and filled a sponge full of vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave Him to drink, saying, Let alone: let us see whether Elias will come to take Him down."¹ It may well be that there is something of mockery here, at least of an affected mockery. Such is often the cover for growing conviction in its first stages. But we feel that there is genuine pity and sympathy underlying the act. Pity was abroad. The pathos of such a death for such a man was widely felt. "All the people that came together to that sight"—we have the touch from the soft pencil of St. Luke—"beholding the things which were done, smote their breasts, and returned."² Pity is nearly always contagious. There was pity in the movement of those who "filled a sponge with vinegar and put it round a hyssop stalk, and lifted it to His mouth."³

But if there was pity, there was something more than pity at work. The darkness had awed them. That patience such as never saint, that delicacy such as never virgin, that courage such as never soldier, that dignity such as never king had displayed, was not altogether unnoticed or unfelt. In the "Eli" cry there was a tremendous reality of prayer. Even to the Roman legionaries, in a country such as Palestine then was, something was known of Elijah. They, very probably, when they were told that "He calleth Elijah," thought of the spectral form of the prophet of retribution, who came of old for vengeance, with the sweep of fire and the rush of rain. "Let alone: let us see whether Elijah cometh to take Him down." They half expected to see

¹ Mark xv. 38.

² Luke xxiii. 48.

³ John xix. 29.

him rush through the dust-cloud of the earthquake just passing away, and they cover their terror by an affectation of wit. There is room for so many contradictions in a human heart. The soldiers despise the crucified Galilæan. Perhaps. But they pass the cooling sponge over the parched lips—therefore, they pity. What they say is frivolous. Possibly; for they jest. But it is tremendous; because, as we listen to the hearts that beat behind those abrupt, broken words, we feel that they tremble.¹

St. John's language, if it is to be literally pressed, would lead us to suppose that more than one took part in that act of pity.² They were the firstfruits of the appeal in the fifth word from the cross. Its result has been the finer feeling, the readier sympathy, the instinctive tenderness, of Christian men and women. "We first knew that we were women when we came to know Christ," was the exclamation of a group of Chinese women to a devoted missionary. Men first knew manhood when they knew Christ. Here was the pledge and beginning of it: the first tiny ripple of that great springtide of sympathetic helpfulness and charity which is breaking upon every shore. The first sweet movement of philanthropy thus comes from the lips of Jesus.

Is this to be rolled back by the morality of a new philosophy? The realm of evolution broadens with a vengeance. From the animal and vegetable world, from the worlds of space, it takes in, in its ever-widening circle, the world of feeling and of duty, the world of society. The suppression of the unadapted and the unfit is the cynical secret of social evolution. We build hospitals, asylums, infirmaries, refuges for children; our weakness is rebuked

¹ Mark xv. 36.

² John xix. 29.

by the wholesome yet awful cynicism of Nature—which excretes suffering and sickly specimens of humanity.

Nay, as long as Christ crucified is worshipped, as long as His words are the charter of Christendom, the sick and suffering will be cared for and ministered to. It may be thought too severe to say that not only alcoholic excess, but luxury, much kitchen-talk, and the like, are rebuked by the poor drink of our dying Lord. But, at the lowest, Christians feel that luxury is to be ransomed by paying a large price for it. Christ is seen in His poor. He gives us a key to the interpretation of the fifth word from the cross—“I was sick, and ye visited Me; whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward.”¹ The sweet appeal of Jesus rolls round the whispering-gallery of the Church. “I thirst!” says Christ. The feverish, the consumptive, the cancerous, the little children with poor hot fingers and wizened faces, say so too. And He takes it up again from their lips, and repeats it in their pathetic voices. In all His words there are heights and depths which are not for us. So of this word one said of old—“*sicut sitiri Deus*,” “our God thirsteth to be thirsted after.” But it *is* for us to hear Christ in hearing His afflicted ones. And each gift, given in this spirit, is like lifting the sponge to pass it over those pale and dying lips.

¹ Matt. xxv. 35-37; x. 42.

THE COMPLETENESS OF THE
CROSS.

SERMON VIII.¹

THE COMPLETENESS OF THE CROSS.

THE SIXTH WORD FROM THE CROSS.

“When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, He said, It is finished.”—JOHN xix. 30.

BEFORE this word was uttered it was formed and conceived in the heart of Christ—“Jesus, knowing that all things were now *finished*, that the Scripture might be accomplished.” This, which is the most general and comprehensive of the seven utterances from the cross, is thus vitally linked with that which is most special and human, and which rises most closely from physical suffering—“I thirst.”

“It is finished.”² *What* is finished? we reverently ask.

i. First, and most obviously, the earthly life under its human conditions was finished.

An utterance equivalent to this comes from the lips of

¹ Preached in Derry Cathedral. Holy Week, 1888.

² John xix. 28. The word here, as in ver. 30, is *τετέλεσται*. The change from the “*accomplished*” of ver. 28, A.V., to the “*finished*” of the R.V. is of first-rate importance and significance, and conveys to English readers a sense such as they did not before possess of the connection between the sixth word from the cross and the marvellous glimpse into the Lord’s soul in ver. 28.

doomed or of dying men every day, and in every land. The most commonplace of the soldiers who stood nearest to the cross, if asked by a rough comrade, or by some of the populace whose curiosity was stimulated, but who had failed to catch those few syllables—"what does the dying Galilæan say?" would have replied—"he is only saying that he is just at the point of death—that all is over with him."¹

But for us, who know something of it from the authentic record of the Gospels, what a life it was !

The evangelists, of course, make no pretensions to give us a complete biography of Jesus Christ upon earth. No human pen, however marvellous, could have compassed the work. If they could, the result might not have been advantageous, on the whole, to the Church or to the world.² But this we do know. The Life whose fountain was in God—the Life, the eternal Life, which was with the Father—was manifested to us. That Life developed itself in a human existence, shrouded in silence all but unbroken for thirty years ; for three years and a half working in sympathetic love, in teaching of exhaustless meaning, in an atmosphere of miracle, yet exposed to suffering and contradiction. Therefore it was the one Life of which He who lived it could say without presumption—"My meat is to be doing evermore, even mentally, the will of Him who sent Me, and so, when the time comes, being able to accomplish His work by one great crowning act."³ "I

¹ Τέλος ἔχει τὰ πάντα μοι. "All things are at end for me," says the dying man in a Greek drama.

² John xxi. 25.

³ Such would seem to be the sense of ἵνα ποιῶ. . . καὶ τελειώσω (John iv. 34)=to be doing continuously and every moment, so as to be able to consummate, when the time shall have come, by one crowning act.

glorified Thee on the earth, having accomplished the work which Thou hast given Me to do." That one white life-page among the records of our blurred and broken human existence is turned over. "It is finished."¹

2. For those who believe in the vital connection of the Old Testament with the New, and in the *exegesis* of apostles and evangelists—not to say of Jesus Himself—there is a second meaning which is suggested almost more instinctively, and which is apparently more prominent in the evangelist's thought. The sixth word from the cross, that all things in *Scripture* have now passed into accomplishment, that Scripture actually and essentially is "finished"—this, as we have already indicated, is largely the conception of St. John. Here, as so often in other instances, the fourth evangelist ventures to read his Master's soul. "Jesus, knowing that all things are now finished, that the Scriptures might be accomplished, saith, I thirst. . . . When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, He said, It is finished."² St. John looks into the heart of Scripture, and then into the heart of Christ.

It is profitable to look at this closely. All things which the Law *required* were "finished" by Christ in His human life. He had "fulfilled all righteousness." All that was *prophesied*, too, of Christ, the centre of the New Testament, was also "finished." Line by line that lengthened epic, of which the Messiah was the subject, was written. Believers, in their zeal, may occasionally have written their own meaning in, and *forced* a Christian reference where it was not designed. But, after all deductions, the poem remains complete, and the image of the Hero can never be volatilized away by the ingenuity of critical objection. Here and there

¹ John xvii. 4.

² John xix. 28-30.

the hints may be ambiguous, and the interpretation obscure ; but, ever and anon, some one arises, and “ teaches in song what he has learned in sorrow.” David wails forth some anguish in the twenty-second psalm, the like of which in its fulness none but One has ever known. Isaiah describes in vision the form which John saw upon Calvary. Or, varying the figure, we may call prophecy a picture growing upon the canvas stroke by stroke. Sometimes centuries elapse between one touch and the next, which could only be given by the hand of a heaven-born painter. Slowly, but surely, was the picture drawn, the crucifixion depicted : yet not merely the crucifixion, as a single painting. High over the cross is a living form that floats in glory. Round the representation of the Crucified are the likenesses of the Ascension and of the Judge upon His throne. And all this was shaped out, not on canvas or in stone, but in deathless words, and then expressed by the living God in human flesh in a human life. “ All things that are written by the prophets shall be accomplished unto the Son of man.”¹ *Prophecy* was “ finished.”

But this “ finished ” refers to a yet wider expansion of Scripture. All that was *typical* was now *realized*. The separate features of prophets, priests, kings, meet together and are centred in Him. One great passage in the Pentateuch brings together and summarizes the different kind of sacrifices under the Law. The Nazarite’s offerings were *four*—the burnt-offering, the sin-offering, the peace-offering, the meat-offering. “ These four, taken together, represent the fourfold fulness of the one offering of Christ.” His total and entire self-dedication answers to the first ; His atonement fulfils the second ; our admission to quiet com-

¹ Luke xviii. 31.

munion with God is the realization of the third; the representation of His death, and the communication of its benefits in a blessed feast, is one part of the fourth.¹ Thus, when His sacrifice draws to its completion, *type* and *sacrifice* are “finished.”

Yet once again, all that was promised of spiritual and abiding import is “finished.” The Old Testament is a book of promises. Some are of dim magnificence; others are homelier and tenderer, of a pathos which touches us to tears. All culminate in the promise of promises—“he that conquereth shall inherit all things.”² Just as one who in youth and spirits walks the mountains some sunny day can say with exultation—“all the sunshine and the shadows, all the clouds and breezes, all the glory and the largeness of those mountain-ranges, all are mine;” yet those who are beside him are none the poorer for this splendid self-appropriation. Each of his companions has the whole sun, and all the sky, and all the mountains, for his enjoyment. None can say “this is mine,” so that others have no part in it. *Every* conqueror inherits the *whole* of the promise.³ The promises are “finished,” here and now, with the death of Jesus. “How many soever be the promises of God, in Him is the Yea; wherefore also through Him is the Amen, unto the glory of God through us.”⁴ All,

¹ Numb. vi. 13-18.

² There is, undoubtedly, greater authority for reading “shall inherit *these things*.” (Apoc. xxi. 7.) But the rendering of the A.V. (so dear to Luther among others) is really identical in meaning. The *ταῦτα* of ver. 7 (if we must adopt it) is the equivalent of the *πάντα* of ver. 5—“I make *all things* new.”

³ See Hengstenberg’s beautiful commentary on this text. “On the Revelation.” Vol. ii. 327. The fundamental passage is Matt. xix. 29.

⁴ 2 Cor. i. 19, 20.

then, which the Law and Prophets promised is *finished*, because it is in substance *obtained*, as the blossoms fall when the fruit is formed.

Once more. Things which were tolerated (imperfection, littlenesses, lower moral ideals acquiesced in for want of a higher principle of spiritual life, rites burdensome and of dark meaning) are abrogated in the general elevation imparted by the great Sacrifice. All that was temporary and accidental in the old religion is “finished,” and man enters into the perfect and eternal.

In short, the human life of the Perfect Man is “finished.” And with it all is done which the Law required; all fulfilled which the prophets foretold; all realized which the types shadowed; all obtained which God promised.

But even yet we are very far from having exhausted the unfathomable word.

It takes in the whole history of the world. The cross is the central dividing point of history. The course of the ages, the chronology of the human race, is summed up in Christ, and finds its demarcation in two letters—B.C. or A.D. All the past leads up to it; all the future proceeds from it. The crisis of history is, in a sense, finished.

The sixth word is yet more deeply true for the Church. A few seconds, and all will be over. The foundations were now laid; He saw the whole temple completed to the top, most spire—

“ . . . from the rock as if by magic grown,
Eternal, silent, beautiful, alone.”

Over against it might be the gates of Hades; but within it and above it were light and peace. The “It is finished” of the new creation is the counterpart of the “It was so” in the story of the old creation.¹

¹ Gen. i. 7, 11, 15, 24, 30.

And yet again, the sixth word comprises the creed of the Church, of all true believers. We hear of two creeds in very different quarters. One is a creed ever elaborating itself, ever growing by a self-evolving process of accretion, ever branching out into new dogmatic subtleties. Another is a creed ever subtracting from itself, so spiritual that by degrees it will at last subtilize itself away, and by virtue of extreme tenuity cease to exist. Such is the new Christianity, from which every dogmatic element is eliminated : in which altruism is substituted for charity, and an idea usurps the place of the living Christ. But with Jesus yielding up His spirit on the cross, the creed also is finished, and the theology of the precious blood established for ever.

Let us ever remember that in two thoughts our salvation is complete : Christ *for* us, and Christ *in* us. But if the first is perfect, the second must ever be imperfect. It is one of the grandest propositions of Augustine that “between the righteousness which justifies and the righteousness wrought in us by that justification there is all the width of the difference between the immortal and mortal, the Divine and the human, the perfect and the imperfect.”¹ There is but one perfect Worker, but one perfect work. Those who have read the psalms most subtly and deeply have found a real link of connection between the last word of the Passion-psalm (“He hath done it”²) and the sixth utterance from the cross. We might with profit hear oftener than we do the old watchword of so many English Christians half a century ago—“Christ’s finished work.”

¹ This is a paraphrase of one immortal sentence in St. Augustin. “Confes.,” xii. 20.

² Ps. xxii. 31.

THE PEACE OF THE CROSS.

SERMON IX.¹

THE PEACE OF THE CROSS.

THE SEVENTH WORD FROM THE CROSS.

“And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, He said, Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit: and having said thus, He gave up the ghost.”—LUKE xxiii. 46.

THE crucifixion had begun about nine o’clock. During the terrible preparation for execution, just as the cross was about to be lifted up with its sacred burden attached, He said, “Father forgive them; for they know not what they do.” After some considerable interval came the second utterance—to the penitent thief—“Verily I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise.” It was near twelve o’clock, as the seismic darkness was gathering over the landscape, that the third sentence of human affection fell from His lips: “Woman, behold thy son . . . behold thy mother.” Just as the three hours’ darkness was beginning to break, the fourth utterance expresses at once the awful reality of the dereliction, and the fact that it was now over—“*Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani.*” The three others follow in rapid succession—“I thirst;” “It is finished;” “Father into Thy hands I commend My spirit.”

¹ Preached in Derry Cathedral. Good Friday, 1888.

There are two remarks which should be made upon the seven words taken collectively :—

1. As regards the evangelists. Of the seven last utterances, St. Matthew and St. Mark give one only; St. Luke three and St. John three. No evangelist (except in the case of the fourth word) records a saying from the cross which is preserved by another. No evangelist gives all the seven. Here, as elsewhere, Bengel's beautiful principle applies, that 'the four books are four voices, which conjointly make up one symphony.'

2. And of such a symphony in this case there is one most important use as regards ourselves. These brief sentences, taken together, imply the necessary doctrine and consolation for every Christian man in the last hours of mortality.

The first requisite for every man under the shadow of death is *pardon*—the great Pardon, with its little earthly reflection in our hearts—God's forgiveness of our sins, our forgiveness of all sins against *us*. The second step of preparation is the meditation upon the rest of Paradise, and the blessed hope of being there with Christ—“for ever with the Lord.” The third utterance may well teach us that it is a false spirituality which would affect to be above love and care for the provision of the last earthly testament, above the disposition in life (so far as our action can influence it) of those whom we hold most dear. The fourth, the cry of dereliction, has a warning for us that, not seldom, even in the case of servants of God, there may be at least temporary darkness of feeling, storms of emotional agitation, soothed and absorbed, we may trust, at last, in the fulness of perfect peace. The fifth word speaks literally of the physical pain of our feverish and suffering humanity;



mystically it may seem to express desire of Sacramental communion with God, and yearning for the refreshment of His presence. Then, as the sixth degree in the progress to a holy death, there comes a fresh and entire laying of our marred work on the one perfect and finished Work. And, last of all, the calm sweetness of a spirit offered to a reconciled Father. The seventh word, as we have noticed, is recorded by St. Luke only; but it is implied and stated historically by St. John, when he says, "He gave up His spirit."¹

The principal things which the seventh word teaches us are these:—

1. It shows us the view of death which was taken by Jesus.

In the general view of that great mystery there are two deficiencies. Death is looked upon simply as fate—irresistible and irrevocable necessity. And the life beyond the grave, so far as it is contemplated at all, is regarded as an impersonal absorption into the universal life, or as a positivist immortality of a subjective character—a place in the memory and affection of those who survive us. But our Lord has no feeling of being dragged by an iron chain. His death comes from a Father's love. Equally does the word tell us that He has the assurance of life in definite personality, the true life of the *spirit* after the body has gone down into the dust of death. "Father, into Thy hand," He says, "I commend," I entrust as a deposit in full assurance that it will be safely kept and faithfully

¹ παρέδωκε τὸ πνεῦμα (sc. τῷ θεῷ). (John xix. 30.) In Stier's "Words of the Lord Jesus" (vol. viii.) the reader may find a beautiful and interesting, if somewhat fanciful, application of the order of the seven last words to the exigencies of the Church in the successive crises of her history.

returned. It is the free, spontaneous, personal, unhesitating surrender of that part of the sanctified nature which is peculiarly superhuman, and clings most closely to the Father, Whose dearest possession on earth it is.¹ The seventh word is the great consciousness of David,² rising to the assurance of immortality, appropriated by Christ with a fulness which David could never reach. Whatsoever is to be deposited by any of the sons of God is safe. How trustfully, then, can the Son of God deposit His life with Him who is the Father of life, the great Fountain of spiritual existence !

Who can doubt that we, who must all enter upon the solemn mystery of death, were intended to draw comfort and brightness from this view of death given us by the dying Lord ? The spirit and body came to be called "my deposit," "that which I have committed unto Him," from a sweet and solemn reminiscence of the last sentence upon the cross.³

The deposit must be safe which is lodged with such a depositary, and vested with such a trustee. Blessed is he who can call God his Father with his latest breath, and imitate Christ, if not in the magnificence of the investment, yet with some faint degree of the filial confidence with which it is lodged.

2. A second lesson derivable from this seventh word is the use to be made of Scripture during the approach of death.

¹ The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews speaks of God as the Father, not of *souls* but of *spirits*. " Shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of *spirits*, and live ? " (Heb. xii. 9.)

² Ps. xxxi. 5.

³ παραθήσομαι (Luke xxiii. 46); τὴν παραθήκην μον (2 Tim. i. 12); ὡς πιστῷ κτιστῷ παρατιθέσθωσαν τὰς ψυχὰς ἑαυτῶν (1 Pet. iv. 19).

Scripture is not only a rule of faith, but a rule of life. Not only of life. One chief employment of it is for the dying. Of the seven last words, *four* are literally or allusively from the Psalms. To separate the Old Testament, and especially the Psalter, from the knowledge of eternal life beyond the grave is to dissociate it from the interpretation of our Lord.

What variety there is in Scripture of words suitable for the spirit in the last hours of human existence ! Christian lands have beautiful hints to take from each other. When the aged Emperor of Germany was dying, a use was made of the *Nunc Dimittis* perfectly in accordance with the occasion on which it was originally uttered ; yet, which almost surprises us. How many of us are wont to associate it exclusively with a quiet, half-exultant thanksgiving for the saving fulness of knowledge contained in the New Testament chapter ! The Song of Simeon was repeated as the great soldier was passing away. The final blessing also at the Emperor's last moment lingers on the heart, and gives a fresh association to the beautiful verse—"the Lord preserve thy going out and thy coming in, from this time forth for evermore."¹ A great poet has spoken (with exaggeration bordering upon irreverence, it must be allowed) of one whose short life did not admit of much speech, but whose speech was touched with the magic light of genius—

" . . . dear as sacramental wine
To dying lips was all he said."

But about Scripture words there is no exaggeration in saying that they are sacramental words. Wonderful, too, is it to note how in sickness, and as they draw near death, people brought up under Christian influences speak Bible language

¹ Ps. cxi. 8.

as if instinctively ; something in the same way as the language of a foreign country seems to come naturally to our lips as we draw near to its shore.

3. Finally, this last word supplies one answer to an objection not seldom made to the Atonement.

How the Atonement effects the objects for which it was wrought we are nowhere told. It is unwise and perilous to press particular images of it too far. But the whole course of natural society is full of the *principle of mediation*—of benefits brought to us or of evils averted by the instrumentality, often by the sufferings, of others. These sufferings are nearly always borne reluctantly, sometimes with utter repugnance. But this last word attests how *willingly* Jesus died ; how true were His own repeated declarations that “He lays down His life ;” that “no man taketh it from Him, but He layeth it down of Himself.”¹

[The preacher ventures to append to these seven sermons some lines which sum up—feebly enough, but in the best poor shape which he can devise—his most matured thoughts upon the Seven Last Words of Jesus from the Cross.

* * * * *

O kingly silence of our Lord !
 O wordless wonder of the Word !
 O hush, that while all Heaven is awed,
 Makes music in the ear of God !
 Silence—yet with a sevenfold stroke
 Seven times a wondrous bell there broke
 Upon the Cross, when Jesus spoke.

One word, one priestly word, He saith—
 The advocacy of the death,
 The intercession by the Throne,
 Wordless beginneth with that tone.

¹ John x. 15-18.

All the long music of the plea
That ever mediates for me
Is set upon the selfsame key.

One royal word—though love prevails
To hold Him faster than the nails,
And though the dying lips are white
As foam seen though a dusky night :
That hand doth Paradise unbar,
Those pale lips tell of a world afar,
Where perfect absolutions are.

One word, one human word—we list
Our adoration for the gift
Which proves that, dying, well He knew
Our very nature through and through.
Silver the Lord hath not, nor gold,
Yet His great legacy behold—
The Virgin to the virgin-soul'd.

Three hours of an unsathom'd pain,
Of drops falling like summer rain,
Earth's sympathy and heaven's eclipse—
Three hours the pale and dying lips
By their mysterious silence teach
Things far more beautiful than speech
In depth or height can ever reach.

One word, the *Eli* twice wailed o'er—
'Tis anguish, but 'tis something more.
Mysteriously the whole world's sin,
His and not His, is blended in.
It is a broken heart whose prayer
Crieth as from an altar-stair
To One who is, and is not, there.

One word, one gentle word. In pain
He condescendeth to complain—
Burning, from whose sweet will are born
The dewinesses of the morn.
The Fountain which is last and first,
The Fountain whence life's river burst,
The Fountain waileth out, “I thirst.”

One royal word of glorious thought,
A hundred threads are interwrought
In it—the thirty years and three,
The bitter travail of the Tree,
Are finished—finished, too, we scan
All types and prophecies—the plan
Of the long history of man.

One word, one happy word—we note
The clouds over Calvary float
In distances, till fleck or spot
In the immaculate sky is not ;
And on the Cross peace falls like balm ;
And the Lord's soul is yet more calm
Than the *commendo* of His psalm.]

THE WITNESS OF HUMAN
LANGUAGE UPON THE CROSS.

SERMON X.¹

THE WITNESS OF HUMAN LANGUAGE UPON THE CROSS.

“And Pilate wrote a title, and put it on the cross. And the writing was, Jesus of Nazareth the King of the Jews. . . . And it was written in Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin.”—JOHN xix. 19, 20.

ALL missionary enterprise is necessarily founded upon a broad and sweeping assumption. That assumption is that Christianity has a universal message for universal humanity.

But the New Testament does not contain the word “Christianity.” That which we call so in our abstract and frigid language in St. Paul’s more personal and tender language is *Christ*. “As the body is one, and hath many members . . . so is Christ.”² “Christ is all, and in all.”³

Yes! Christianity is Christ. And, therefore, upon this great anniversary of the missionary work of the Church of England, when it is meet and right to go to the deep foundation of all missionary enterprise, I propose to speak of the fitness of Jesus to be the Saviour of humanity.

“Pilate wrote a title, and put it on the cross . . . and it

¹ Preached in St. Paul’s Cathedral, on the 190th anniversary of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. June 15, 1891.

² 1 Cor. xii. 12.

³ Col. iii. 11.

was written in Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin.” In the august tragedy of which this incident forms part there is nothing without significance. Let us consider to-day the symbol of Christ’s fitness to be the universal Saviour, and the fitness of the symbol.

I. Think first of the symbol of this universal fitness of Jesus to be the Saviour of humanity in the incident of the text.

The mockery by the Roman cohort brings out the magnificent mission and destiny of the King of the Jews.

It has been said in later days that this mockery is utterly “unworthy of the severe gravity of the Roman legionaries.”¹ But through all changes there is a certain permanent element of human character which survives ages and revolutions. The modern Romans during the carnival in the Corso have been stigmatized by one of the keenest of observers as sullen and gloomy comedians, obstinately making believe to be amused. The Roman legionaries, whose blood still runs in the veins of the grave buffoons of the Corso, acted a coronation, and they acted it out. Nothing was wanting to the terrible completeness of this hideous comedy. Not the robing with the camp-mantle, actually of a faded cochineal scarlet, ideally purple.² Not the crown of acanthus-thorns, whose sharp points to the eye of faith represent the sting of sin and the sharpness of death, while

¹ Instances of such elaborate mockeries in various countries have been discovered without difficulty. The cruel sport of the Alexandrians with the idiotic Carabas, whom they subjected to a mock coronation in derision of Agrippa, as recorded by Philo, is curiously like this part of the evangelical narrative. Neither crown, nor sceptre, nor robe is wanting. The passage (from Philo, in “*Flaccum*”) is quoted at length in A. Bynæus. “*De Morte J. C.*” Tom. iii. lib. iii. c. 4, 151, 152.

² χλαμόδα κοκκίνην (Matt. xxvii. 27); πορφύραν (Mark xv. 17).

the circling coronet is the sign of victory.¹ Not the acclamation, or the homage, or the wassail-cup. They played their comedy and they played it to the bitter end.

Nor in this strange comedy—which was yet the deepest tragedy of time—can we fail to find an indication of its far-reaching, of its world-wide import. An oblong tablet was placed over the cross, which set forth the crime of which the Sufferer was accused, written not by the very hand but by the command of Pilate.² The Roman Proconsul dimly felt the significance and importance of the inscription. The sentence was partly a sneer at the Jews, a desire to wound them through their pride and hatred. But there was also a feeling of the true royalty of this mysterious Man. Of the different forms of the inscription St. John's is probably that which is most literally accurate. For he stood nearest to the cross; and in hours of suffering, outward things, sometimes comparatively small, are burnt and branded into the memory. Truth does not stand upon syllables. But his are, we may well believe, the very words.³ The true order is not that of our Authorized Version, but “Hebrew-wise, Roman-wise, Hellenic-wise”⁴—the national, the official, the common tongue.

But there is more to be said than this accurate commonplace.

¹ ἀκάνθινον στέφανον. (Mark xv. 17.)

“Spina mortis stimulus,
Sed coronæ circulus
Mortis est victoria.”

(Adam de St. Victor. (Probably, however, wrongly attributed to him).
“Sequentia de Coron. Spin.”)

² So Bengel understands John xix. 19-22. (“Pilati *jussu* non *manu* scriptum.”)

³ *Ipsissima verba.* (Bengel.)

⁴ ‘Ἐβραϊστὶ, Ρωμαϊστὶ, Ἑλληνιστὶ.

Languages have a *character*. Hebrew is coloured and simple, rich in images, almost half its verbs pictures, its construction broken, a gulf of fragments. Latin is strong, imperious, sententious—the language of war and jurisprudence, yet capable of a music, sometimes stately, sometimes compressed, sometimes even tender. Was not one of its poets “wielder of the stateliest measure ever moulded by the lips of men”? Greek is “a musical and golden tongue, which gives a soul to the objects of sense, and a body to the abstractions of philosophy.”¹

Languages, again, have a *history* as well as a *character*. Hebrew was the language of revelation—of the Law of Moses, of the psalms, and the prophets. The Latin tongue has had two histories. Of these the first was with the Roman people. The second is connected with the massive theology, with the sweet and awful hymns of the Latin Church—with eternal truths immortally expressed; with errors more seductive for the airy or solemn lines in which they are floated by the organ, strangely beautified by a system of pronunciation sometimes sonorous, sometimes caressing. The Greek language represents the principle, or “bundle of principles,” summed up under the word “progress.”² Greek is the pollen which has been used to vitalize all the flowers of art and science. Everything on earth, even at the present moment, which really lives and moves, is of Greek origin.

Thus the three languages whose letters were engraven over the cross not only represented three races, but certain qualities and tendencies. Wherever these exist; wherever there is an eye to read, a hand to write, a tongue to speak; the cross has a message, and the King a kingdom. The

¹ Gibbon. ² I owe this thought to a lecture of Sir H. S. Maine,

title was only translated into dogma by St. John when he wrote—"He is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."¹ St. John's Gospel is from end to end a Gospel of witness. Here we have the witness of human language to the thorn-crowned King.

II. We have to consider the fitness of this symbol.

Man has spiritual instincts which find expression in language. *How* he comes to have these is not the question now. We are concerned with the *fact* of their existence, *not* with the *mode* of their becoming. The conscience of the saint with its exquisite sensibility *may* in some past millennium *have been* the same thing as the conscience of a pointer, cowering when he knows that he has transgressed; but, as a matter of fact, it *is not* the same thing.

Man's spiritual instincts are these. The instinct of the *Divine*, of *prayer*, which makes the little one at the parent's knee meet the lesson in prayer more than half-way. The instinct of *immortality*, which disqualifies man from believing that the living thing which he calls "I" will have no existence after the change known to him as death. The instinct of *morality*, distorted, degraded, applying its terms wrongly, it may be. Still, the lowest, the most sordid, the most material languages, have something equivalent to right and wrong, to good and bad. There are times when, though they have lien among the pots, yet they become as the dove which is covered with silver wings and her feathers like gold in the sunlight of moral ideas—when the men who speak them are able to say, "I ought." There is in most lands the feeling of unworthiness which underlies the instinct of *sacrifice*. There is nearly everywhere the instinct of a *natural Christian*

¹ 1 John i. 2.

consciousness, the yearning after a perfect manhood. The missionary knows that these instincts find some expression, however faint and broken, in all languages ; that deep under the ruins of the Fall there are affections which have for their object the Infinite God, and for their career the illimitable ages. And, as he works at framing the grammar and dictionary of those tongues, he most of all Christians owns the fitness of the symbol—"in Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin."

And the fitness of Jesus is *exclusive*.

There are three great religious systems besides Christianity which are missionary, in a greater or less degree. Of these, Hinduism, with its hundred and ninety or two hundred millions of adherents, is not one. Removed from its local idols and ancestral shrines, it withers on every foreign soil.

But *Judaism* has made galvanic efforts from time to time. In our Lord's day it was to some extent missionary. The scribes and Pharisees "compassed sea and land to make one proselyte."¹ They had no commission beyond national vanity and personal self-will. At the present date there is, I believe, a Jewish Missionary Society. But this is scarcely serious. It is playing at mission-work.

Mohammedanism is a missionary religion, not altogether by the sword. At its beginning it elevated the pagan Arabs. At this moment it raises the negro above his fetisch. It is certainly making some progress in Western and Central Africa. Its merits are a lofty, if sterile, *theism* ; the *resignation* implied in the word "Moslem ;" a spirit of *prayer* which impresses all who are brought into contact with it. But it is unfitted for humanity. Mohammedanism inspires no tenderness ; it creates no humility ; it breathes

¹ Matt. xxiii. 15.

no purity. Talk as men may, the obstinate filthiness of its founder's life can never be sweetened. The condemnation of the man to all unsophisticated souls is that the authentic records of his life cannot be left upon a table where they may fall under the eye of a Christian woman.¹ Moreover, it is a religion which cannot breathe or live in any progressive community. It is stationary with its sterile God, with its dead inspiration impaginated in the Koran.

Buddhism, as we all know, has been successful, and largely successful. But it has been successful only with one type of the human soul. And what are its results where it is embraced? Scepticism, fanatic hatred of life, incurable sadness; denial of the personality of man, of God, of the reality of nature. Acceptance of the principles of Buddhism is simply a sentence of death intellectually, morally, spiritually, almost physically, passed upon the race which submits to the melancholy bondage of its creed of desolation. Buddhism is the opium drunkenness of the spiritual world without the dreams which are the temporary consolation of the victims of the drug. It is enervating without being soft, and contemplative without being profound. It is a religion which is spiritual without recognizing the soul, virtuous without the conception of duty, moral without the admission of liberty, charitable without love. It surveys a world without nature, and a universe without God.² The

¹ Dr. Koelle's "Mohammed and Mohammedanism" (Rivington, 1889) is the best refutation, by a consummate Arabic scholar, of the rehabilitation of Mohammed lately so popular. See especially p. 392; also Appendix I. 487-509.

² "These populations neither deny nor affirm God. They simply ignore Him. To assert that they are atheists would be very much the same thing as to assert that they are anti-Cartesians. As they are neither for nor against Descartes, so they are neither for nor against

human soul under its influence is not so much drunken as asphyxiated by a monotonous unbalanced perpetual repetition of one-half of the truth—"the world passeth away, and the lust thereof."

Over against these three religions we have the universal Saviour for the universal wants of the human race.

III. Since its foundation in 1701, the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel has pursued two objects. (1) The care and instruction of our colonists. (2) The conversion of the heathen with whom they are brought in contact.

1. For our colonies.

Our emigrants each year confer a double benefit. They relieve the country which they relinquish of a part of its surplus population. To the new countries where they fix their abode they pay back with interest the benefits which those countries yield. If nature gives hospitality to all able-bodied applicants, the colonists carry with them in most cases the elements of *civilization*. Nay! of something higher. Since the eye of the Church has been steadily fixed upon her duty; since the great truism of Bishop Blomfield has wakened us from our slumber—"an episcopal Church without a Bishop is a contradiction in terms"—Church after Church has been planted, diocese after diocese formed, until the ten colonial sees of 1841 have grown into eighty-two.

By fidelity to this principle, we are enabled to retort the great argument of Fénélon against the Reformed Communions of his time.

That argument was set forth in an Epiphany sermon on the text, "Arise! shine." Its subject was the ever-renewed God. They are just children. A child is neither atheist nor deist. He is nothing." (Voltaire, "Dict. Phil.", art. "Athéisme.")

I have here repeated a few sentences from the "Epistles of St. John." 157.

fecundity of the Church ; the proof to the reason as well as to the imagination conveyed by its catholicity. "Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows?" In an oratorical movement not unworthy of the splendid genius of Bossuet the preacher calls upon the winds to waft the messengers of the cross upon their wings, and on the waves to bear them forward with the triumphant swiftness of the storm. He refers in lofty language to the work done by the Jesuits of Portugal in India ; to the young martyrs of Japan and China, who walked the *via dolorosa* in the seventeenth century as bravely as their predecessors in the Coliseum had done in the second or third century.

Fénélon presses home the argument of Augustine against the schismatics of Africa. Societies separated from the parent-stem are *sterile* ; they are *local institutions*. To borrow the image of a later Roman Catholic writer of genius, it is easy to declaim against the great Roman Communion—easy for the tiny rill that trickles through the grass over sand and pebbles to pipe its pretty note of self-conscious purity, and sing to the great sea, "I am purer than thou art." But with the shout of its million breakers, with the rush of its unsleeping tides, the ocean answers—"thou art pure because thou art tiny ; I carry impurity because I am the throbbing heart of the world, and bear commerce and war and enterprise from shore to shore." There is something attractive in the vast sweep of this argument. Great minds in the Reformed Communion owned to Fénélon that they were drawn Romeward by this alone—by Rome's *extension* and *fecundity*.¹

¹ "Œuvres Spirituelles de Fénélon." Sermon pour la Fête de l'Epiphanie. Tom. I. 355-370.

How does all this stand now on this hundred and ninetieth anniversary of the Society?

The English race has the foreway in the vast new tracts which have been opened to civilized humanity. Her children are the most prolific, the most adventurous, the most adapted for self-government, of the sons of men.

Let me cite for you a calculation as to the probable distribution of the populations of the future made by a great French statesman about a quarter of a century ago.

“In a few centuries, one or two hundred millions of men, speaking Spanish and Portuguese, will be spread over countries thirty times greater than France ; two hundred millions of Russians will people the ninth part of the globe ; three or four hundred millions of Anglo-Saxons will occupy countries thirty-five times larger than France. And we French, in the seventeenth century the most numerous people in Europe, we shall count possibly fifty or sixty millions of men in our lot of little Europe and of North Africa.”¹

Thus, by the progress of events, we trace, with solemn awe, “the footsteps of God as they sound down the corridors of human history.” By that progress; by the happy Providence which reserved for the English Church a corporate, historical union with the historical Church ; by the renewed sense of the spiritual importance of this corporate unity, leaping into life and making the very air electric just as our colonization touched upon a new era,—the argument of Fénelon is now like one of those missiles which comes back and wounds those who hurled it. Not in vain has

¹ “Varia.” (“L’Avenir des Nations Européennes,” p. 111.) I believe that in France this remarkable anonymous collection of brief essays is generally attributed to M. Guizot.

our Society followed the colonists of our land to every shore with its help ; not in vain does it put into their hands the English Bible and the Prayer-book ; not in vain does it strive that in every forest and waste successive Sundays shall not pass away unnoticed—that, as new and crowded cities rise, cathedrals shall rise with them. The vastest volume of worship even in years to which some of you may attain will not be in Latin, but in English ; not to the Virgin, but the Virgin-born. We shall have our part in the note of *catholicity* as well as of *apostolicity*.

Still over the crucifix is written—"in Hebrew, Latin, Greek." But the crucifix is not all. It does but express one part of His history. *It* speaks of the darkness and the death. The light and the life overflow from the immobility of the carven wood, and fill the heaven with blue and the Church with song. His glory is written in every tongue. "Every whit of it saith *glory* ;"¹ as in the church, when the great organ swells, the very wood palpitates and quivers like a living heart under the hand which rests upon it.

2. For mission-work among the heathen.

Here the limits of time will only enable me to glance at British India. Of this the total population is about two hundred and eighty-five millions, of which Hindoos make up a hundred and ninety millions, Mohammedans fifty millions, Buddhists forty-three millions and a half, while Christians of all communions cannot be estimated at more than two millions and a half.

Is this a hopeless calculation, conveying a message of despair to us to-day here in this great cathedral, at the very heart of English Christianity ?

¹ Ps. xxix. 9.

Listen to another brief calculation.

In the census of forty years ago Indian Christians stood at 113,000. Twenty years ago they had grown to 318,000. They are now between two and three millions. At the same rate of progress, in A.D. 2091 they will number from thirty-six to forty millions.

Let me tell once again a well-known legend, that you may leave St. Paul's Cathedral on this great anniversary with a happy augury.

In the Decian persecution, seven noble youths were hunted into a mountain-cave in the neighbourhood of Ephesus. The captain of the pursuers caused a strong rough wall to be piled up against the only issue from the cavern. The Christian Confessors slept; but the souls of the righteous were in the hand of God. They slept a hundred and eighty-seven years; but no harm touched them, and Death never chilled them with his breath. Then at last the sunlight streamed in upon them, and the sleepers woke. They hungered. One of their company was sent to buy bread in Ephesus. As he hastened on his errand, he discovered that, while the permanent outlines of the country remained the same, all secondary objects were changed. At last, what was his joy and amazement as he saw a cross over the great gate of Ephesus! When the man—at once so old and yet young—came into the street, and passed into a shop to buy bread, his dress, his accent, the gold piece which he offered—now an old coin of a half-forgotten emperor—filled people with astonishment, and he was brought before the court. The magistrate called in the bishop to decide upon a case so strange. All ended by a visit of the bishop and his priests to the company of friends; and, after prayers and Eucharist, the seven slept sweetly in Jesus.

This is, at least, a vivid picture how the years pass on, with changes so minute and gradual as to be almost imperceptible. But, because these changes are continuous, they swell to a vast aggregate. The legend of the Seven Sleepers leads us to consider how overwhelming our surprise would be if the new world, which is *making itself* every moment almost unnoticed, could be presented in a moment to eyes still full of the impressions of the older order. There is an interval between us and the battle of Plassey of only a hundred and thirty-four years—much less than that between the falling asleep and the waking of the legendary sleepers.

The increase in the numbers of Christians in India, which I mentioned as probable, is only calculated at the present rate of progress. But the triumph of Christianity in the Roman Empire makes us recognize the existence of masses of thought, apparently almost in equilibrium, until at last we perceive that one is gaining upon the other, and at last preponderates with a crash which arouses the attention of the world. This process is being repeated in India. Those who are much connected with education tell of essays from thoughtful young men and women, “leading towards the confines of religion ; of reverence gliding towards something closer to the Christian faith.” They discern the silent preparation for a movement in mass.

I have been able only to touch the rim of this great subject. I can say nothing of Africa, with its fifteen dioceses—of the magnificent country opened before England in Mashonaland.

The last has been a favourable year for the revenue of the Society. In 1890, £164,000 flowed into its treasury—£26,000 more than was ever before collected. Yet how much is left undone, especially for our colonies ! Listen to

the voice of one poor emigrant to Algoma, speaking to his Bishop. “I would help you, indeed I would. But I have not bread for my children.” Oh that one possessed the art to make the Name above every name a spell as potent to open the purses of English people as the name of a favourite race-horse ; and the want could be supplied ! And then there is a better missionary offering than money—such an offering of young devotion as the University of Dublin is sending to Chotâ Nagpur.

Christ’s voice is still thrown across the gulf of ages. There are those in whom He sees the stuff of which heroes and martyrs, the leaders of the forlorn hopes of His army, are made. From cricket, from the river, from opulent and luxurious homes, He calls them. He wins them by the witchery of heaven, by the magic of His voice. He charms them by the very hopes which He shivers. He takes them in His hand, and blesses, and *breaks* them. He calls them from the struggle for wealth and honour, saying, with that sweet imperative voice—“ sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor,” in the only true riches, “ and thou shalt have treasure in heaven : and come, follow Me.”¹

A Canadian bishop has lately described what he saw and heard one night. Himself and his were on one side of a great Canadian river ; a company of Christian Indians on the other. As the Englishmen gazed into the falling fire they heard a hymn across the river. This was succeeded by a hush. The song of the Red men across the water drew out a song from them, and that touched the Indians to a prayer whose measured tones just reached them across the water.

O sweet communion of saints ! “ What was the river

¹ Luke xviii. 22.

between?" asks the Bishop. What, indeed? On one side there rose prayers and praises in the language of Milton and Shakespeare, of saints and sages; on the other, in words borrowed by the wild hunters from the glee of the waterfall or from the sighing of the pinewood. Yet once again "the whole earth" seemed to be "of one language and of one lip."¹ Out from the darkness there rose not a mere picture—a reality. Not the white Christ, with the blood-drops trickling down; but the living Christ, radiant and mighty. The harp of language with its myriad chords rang out through the starry silence. Not the Indian and the English only. Not one language was quite absent from the chorus. No longer Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin. "All nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues."²

¹ Gen. xi. 1.

² Apoc. vii. 9.



PROPHECY AND THE GOSPELS.

SERMON XI.¹

PROPHECY AND THE GOSPELS.

"He went about doing good. . . . To Him give all the prophets witness."—ACTS x. 38, 43.

IN this address of the Apostle St. Peter to Cornelius and to his company, we find two of the great subjects which are constantly spoken of by St. Peter in his other recorded addresses and also in his First Epistle. We have the personality of Jesus Christ our Lord; and we have also Messianic prophecy.

Here, as elsewhere, St. Peter handles prophecy as a musician does his instrument: the bow seems to leap from string to string. Now it is the treachery of Judas foretold in a psalm; now it is the outpouring of Pentecost, fore-announced by Joel; now it is the Prophet like unto Moses; now it is the strain of resurrection-triumph in one psalm and another.² All the leaves of prophecy, like one great sunflower, turn to Christ the Light. "To Him give all the prophets witness."

¹ Being the substance of a sermon on behalf of the British and Foreign Bible Society, preached in Westminster Abbey on the Fourth Sunday after Easter, May 4, 1890.

² Acts i. 16-20; ii, 16-21; iii. 22-24; ii. 24-65.

What great words those are about the incarnation of our Lord in the thirty-eighth verse! “God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power” (there is all the momentum of it); “He went about doing good” (there is all the activity of it); “healing all that were oppressed of the devil” (there is all the tenderness of it); “for God was with Him” (understand it rightly, rise with the words—and there is all the theology of it). And so in the two sentences which I have read for our text this morning, in pleading with you for the British and Foreign Bible Society, we have the two great divisions of the Holy Scriptures. Reversing the order as they here stand, we have, first, prophecy, answering to the Old Testament; and then we have the Gospels, answering to the New Testament.

Now, first, for prophecy. We shall do well to remind ourselves of the part which, as a matter of fact, was played by Messianic prophecy in the preparation of the world for Christ. The early progress of the gospel perplexes us by its rapidity. St. Paul, in his day, applies to it one of the psalms which we heard chanted this morning—the nineteenth—that psalm of the sunlight—“their sound went out unto all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world.”

How are we to account for the rapid propagation of the gospel in the early ages? Most educated people have read Gibbon’s famous fifteenth chapter. He gives us, as many of you will remember, five causes, and very real causes they were—the zeal of the early Christians; the awful energy of their proclamation of judgment by Christ; their intense belief in miracles; their austere morality; their union and discipline.

It is often asked—“why does not the gospel spread

more quickly now"? Many will at once answer: "the reason is obvious; there are no miracles." But here let two remarks be made. First, then, so far as the apostolic Epistles would lead us to judge, the New Testament preachers did not very often, or very much, appeal to miracles. I desire you to note the qualification. Most assuredly they did appeal to miracles. Every student of the New Testament will remember that statement in the second chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews.¹ But that which they appealed to, after all, was rather *the miracle* than the miracles. They told how in the fulness of time One came down from heaven to earth, and wore the form of man. They told how the heaven over Him broke into stars, and the earth beneath His feet and by His side blossomed into flowers, of miracles. Down the long corridors and the weary wards of the hospital of this world He passed, ever doing good. Round His path there were broken lives, and broken hopes, and broken hearts, and broken bodies. He went about healing all that were oppressed under the dreadful dynasty of the calumniator of the love of God.² From the centre of that human heart He felt round the whole vast circumference of our human sorrow; and all the miracles which He did sank into insignificance compared with *the Miracle which He is*. And so, beyond question, Gibbon should have added the Personality, *i.e.* the character and the work of our Lord to his five causes. No miracles now! Perhaps not. But, in India and elsewhere, Christianity comes with the complex

¹ "God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to His own will." (Heb. ii. 4.)

² τοὺς καταδυαστενομένους ὑπὸ τοῦ διαβόλου.

miracle of civilization, with the tender miracle of philanthropy, with the stupendous miracle of science.

A second great cause of the early spread of the gospel is omitted by Gibbon. It is the conviction which ran round the world that prophecy was fulfilled in Jesus. And why had prophecy such an effect? Because there had been a special preparation for it. In the great cities of the Roman Empire which were within reach of the Mediterranean there were vast Jewish populations. These masses of Jews had synagogues. They had a sacred library. And, as we well know in these days, people do not touch each other merely like stones. There is a passionate contagion which rises from the contact of ideas and spreads from man to man. Round that singular people with their sacred book there was an Oriental context—an Oriental scent, so to speak. And the strangest part of that strange book was its strange interpretation. And so to Antioch, to Ephesus, to Alexandria, and to many another centre, came the Christian missionary, himself perhaps a witness of the sufferings of Christ and of the glory that followed.

His message generally had two parts.

First of all, the missionary told of the whitest life that ever was lived, of the most perfect death that ever was undergone, in our human flesh. Into that story he poured his own passionate conviction. His story was as high as the heart of the Eternal God; it was as deep as the heart of man. It was pitiful, and yet it was sublime; it spoke of a life passed in the dustiest prose of earth, and yet clothing itself, as it went on, with the azure poetry and with the golden ideals of the most glorious of all lives. The Incarnation of which he spoke was not the ascent of man, painfully struggling his way to Divinity; it was the descent of God to

man—not, as a great thinker has said, the Deification of man, but the humanification of God. It told how the eternal Son of God was conceived by the Holy Ghost and born of a Virgin-mother. It told how a travel-stained Man, with the tears rolling down His cheeks, raised the dead. It told how He hung on a cross of shame. It told how He took the plunge of death, and how the glory broadened on to the further shore; how the shadow of a piece of wood a few feet high was projected into the heaven of heavens; how, when the tragedy was over, the “Hallelujah Chorus” of creation rang out in the distance—“King of kings, and Lord of lords.”

But the early missionary, as we see by those addresses of St. Peter, did something more. It was as if he stepped up to a crape-covered easel, as if he showed an old picture—a triptych—with its three parts, the life, the death, the resurrection of the Son of man and the Son of God. It was as if he showed how the great picture grew through the ages, each prophet adding a touch and then passing away into the darkness. Whether the Deuteronomist were later than Moses or no, the witness believed, and told men, that that ancient book spoke of a Prophet like unto Moses. Whether David wrote a large number of psalms, or one psalm, or no psalm at all, one whom he believed to be David gave that kingly look to the picture. Whether it were the first or the second Isaiah, one whom he called Isaiah lent Him the dim sorrow and the splendid beauty. Thus, the missionary told the fact of the death and resurrection, and then pointed to the scroll. He pointed to two miracles—to the miracle of the Man, and to the miracle of the writing. See the result in this case: “While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which

heard the word.”¹ Gibbon then should have added to his five causes of the rapid conquest of the Gospel “the conviction of the fulfilment of prophecy”—accompanying the statement, if he would, by one of those immortal sneers which the world seems unable to forget. Christianity triumphed under false pretences, if the Messianic interpretation of the Old Testament was entirely in the wrong.²

Now for the other part of the citation. Between the thirty-eighth and the forty-third verses of this tenth chapter of Acts, it seems to me that we have a compendious summary of the essence of each of the four Gospels. We have, at all events, the outlined description of Christian thought about our Lord’s work and Person. “God anointed Him with the Holy Ghost and with power: He healed all that were oppressed of the devil.” Is not that a summary of St. Luke? “He went about doing good.” Is not that the vivid practical touch of St. Mark’s Gospel? “God was with Him.” Taken in the highest sense, is not that a compression of St. John’s highest thought? “To Him give all the prophets witness.” Is not that an abridgment of the substance of St. Matthew?

Now, there are voices round us asking at the present moment in various tones: “these Gospels, the four Gospels, do not assert directly their own inspiration. How may we know that they are Divine—that they are inspired for us?” Of course, a believing Christian will think of

¹ *Acts x. 44.*

² I should here notice with gratitude my obligations for much of this argument upon the part played by prophecy in the early propagation of the gospel to the “*Propædia Prophetica; or, Use and Design of the Old Testament*,” by Dr. Lyall, late Dean of Canterbury (Rivington, 1854)—a work which I read with delight and instruction many years ago, and which I am happy to observe was republished not long since.

words which we have already heard in the Gospel for this day—"the Holy Ghost, He shall glorify Me: for He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it unto you; He shall bring to your remembrance all things that I have said."¹

But let us proceed further. What is a Christian? Is not a Christian one who lives in personal relation to Jesus Christ? Now observe this. Our relation to the living Christ, our relation to the Christ in heaven is conditioned by our relation to the Christ of history, to the Christ who went about doing good. If Christ lives, if Christ acts upon His Church and upon the souls of men; and if He is pleased to do so invisibly and inaudibly; then there must be an authentic record of His life upon earth. Such a record there was and is. At first it was oral. Then it was moulded, according to the wants of the Church in different places, into four forms.

And this argument extends to the Epistles. As our present relation to Christ is conditioned and bounded by the Gospels, so our relation to the primitive Church is conditioned by the Epistles. Therefore every true Church, and every true form of Christian life, must bear to be confronted with the Epistles and the Gospels. The Church, which is affected with Bibliophobia, admits that she has something to be afraid of. We have, indeed, at present, no authoritative theory of inspiration to present to the Church or to the world. If we may judge by signs and tokens round us, the Church may be destined for many years to pass through anxious consideration upon the subject. We may long for something like Bacon's beautiful fancy in "The New Atlantis." We may wish to be able to show from the pages of primitive history that some copy of the

¹ Fourth Sunday after Easter. John xiv. 26.

Gospels, some copy of the New Testament, went over the sea divinely guided, laid up in an ark of cedar, covered over with a palm-branch—went on under the guidance of a mysterious pillar casting itself abroad into a firmament of stars. But whatever our secret wishes, we have nothing of the kind.

Yet one analogy we have which may perhaps put us in the right track. Is there not a sure tact which guides the opinion of the world, even upon its own literature? Who doubts that Lear, or Antigone, or Agamemnon stands supreme amongst the works of human genius? The consent of all that feels, of all that knows, of all that loves, assures us of that. Why may not a surer, but divinely guided tact, guide the Church in her estimation of the Bible?

When we turn back to the earliest records we find that it was so. We find St. Ignatius appealing to the Gospels as we might do.¹ We find the Muratorian Canon at an early period.² Of course I have no space here and now to attempt to guard this analogy from the evident abuses to which it is liable. A man may say, and say falsely—“nothing is inspired which does not inspire me.” He may assert, “I have a faculty of fragmentary or molecular assimilation of Holy Scripture, so that I can tell which parts are inspired and which are not.” Or, again—“there are human books—books admittedly human—which *find me* more than the Bible does.” Or he may pronounce that canon-

¹ See especially “Ep. ad Philad.,” § 5-8.

² This “Fragment on the Canon” is believed to give the warrant of the second century to nearly all the books which appear now in the New Testament. It was first published in 1740 by Muratori from a manuscript in the Ambrosian Library.

ical literature is the mere classical literature of Christianity. But let it never be forgotten that the Church of God is the witness and the keeper of Holy Writ. These are some of the great questions which press upon the Church at this time.

I plead with you this morning for the British and Foreign Bible Society. Its receipts, no doubt, seem to be very vast —something over £212,000,¹ I believe, during the past twelve months—and yet it is £15,000 short of the claims upon it. Now, about the British and Foreign Bible Society, what needs to be said? It is one great assistant of our foreign missions. The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel is in debt to it for thirty or forty translations, and the Church Missionary Society for sixty or seventy. But there are other reasons to be grateful for its work. In the countries of civilized Europe and beyond, over two millions of copies—either of the whole Bible, or of the New Testament, or of the New Testament with the Psalms, or of separate books of the Bible—were circulated in the course of the last year.² Who does not know that in France, in Spain, in Italy, there is at the present moment what has been well called “a chaos of disintegrated convictions”? In two of these countries, at least, there has grown up a literature vast and powerful, but at the same time materialistic, and sometimes profligate. An eminent Italian

¹ Of this total, the sum of £98,189 19s. 10d. represents receipts for Scriptures sold at home and abroad. The *new* income, under all heads, was, therefore, only £113,887 10s. 4d.

² The total circulation by the Society for 1889-90 at home, in the colonies, on the continent of Europe, and in other lands where there are missions, or where the Bible Society is itself the only Missionary Society at work, reached the number of 3,792,263 copies in Bibles, Testaments, and Portions. The total issues of the Society since its formation in 1804 have been 123,929,046 copies.

scholar has lately confessed the superiority of English and German literature, from the general acquaintance of its peoples with the Holy Scriptures. The very presence of the Book of God in any land, far and wide, gives at least a hush of awe and the sanctity of a great ideal—so that when a certain point of corruption has been reached, the whole community cries indignantly at last—“we have read Christ’s word. Christ’s voice is upon the air. No more of this.”

And here in England, at home, that Church of which most of us within these walls are members, seems to me to appeal to the Holy Scriptures, I will venture to say, more boldly and more openly than any other Church in the world. She takes order for the constant reading of the Scriptures in her services, and that without note or comment. She does not treat the sacred text, especially of the New Testament, as if it were a feeble thing too weak to walk by itself, and which needs to be supported. The great philosophical ecclesiastic, Hooker, has asserted that the reading of the Holy Scripture to the people, of the First and Second Lessons, from the desk, is about the best form of Christian preaching.

I may suitably remind you what a place this great Abbey holds in connection with the glory of the word of God. Think of Caxton’s printing-press. From the altar of this cathedral the monarch on her coronation received the Bible from the hands of the archbishop as the most valuable thing in the whole world. Two undertakings, great in different degrees—the “Speaker’s Commentary” and the Revised Version of the Holy Scriptures—have their connection with this locality. From this place, in some measure, into the very bone and marrow of English thought

and English feeling the English Bible has passed. Even the comparative political steadfastness of our nation, contrasted with the beating of the stormy pulses of the Latin world, may have an explanation in this. The great Napoleon, perhaps, was not so far mistaken when, on collecting a library for himself and his officers on his voyage to Egypt, he placed the Old and New Testaments on the shelf of political works. My brethren, a great and free nation demands from an Established Church the best exposition of Scripture that can be had. The chapter of this great Minster has done and is doing its part nobly in that work. The good sense of English criticism corrects grotesque originality; it restrains the exuberant mass and bulk of learning; it chastens the sentimental and picturesque pedant by the wholesome chastisement of ridicule. Therefore, in that day when the Church of England speaks with her enemies in the gate—when, possibly, some great voice from a chamber not far off shall ask how many arguments there are for the existence of an Established Church—there may be some who will make answer that, besides other things, the teachers of the Church of England—not least one who is now living amongst them—as the ages go on, have broadened the breadth and deepened the depth of their thoughts, and have renewed the love of educated Englishmen for the old Bible.

The British and Foreign Bible Society has sent abroad multitudes of copies in this land, as elsewhere—about a million more in the course of the past year. There are not wanting those who will tell us they are wasted and abused. Yet, after all, how many of those Bibles do their work in some sense! What a history a collection of Bibles would give us if we could only have it! One would repre-

sent to us the sigh from a penitent, and one the song from a saint, and one would have its story of strength for some one who was tempted, and through one Christ's heart of fire melted the icicles round some heart of ice.

The light of critical study does its work year after year. True criticism gives us what people contemptuously call minute accuracies; but every minute accuracy is to be respected, because it is of the noble family of truth. When we turn to the latest, and perhaps the greatest, of English commentaries, and when we are told how the very order of the names of our Lord Jesus Christ in the Epistle to the Hebrews has its own lesson to teach us—that the sacred name “Jesus” occurs nine times in that Epistle, and that in every case the place in which it stands is the key to the whole argument of the passage—we see into what subtle nobilities of Christian thought criticism can initiate devout labour.¹

But, besides this, there is another criticism—the criticism of sorrow, of suffering, of pain, soft and sweet, yet searching, penetrating, resistless. There must be a harmony between the sacred Book and the human mind before the Book can do its work; even as there must be a harmony between Christ and the human heart before Christ can be all in all to it. Yes! it is with the written word as it is with the Incarnate Word. We must be lonely before we can understand His loneliness; we must be thorn-crowned before we can understand the thorn-crowned King; before we can grasp with all our strength the bleeding feet these hands of ours must be cut and bleeding too. Even so we must be penitent before we can understand the penitential psalms; and we must be stricken with the sense of our own

¹ Bishop Westcott. “Epistle to the Hebrews.” (Pp. 33-35.)

sin before we can understand the way of salvation through Jesus Christ our Lord.

There are not wanting those who tell us that the Bible is a strange book. "Look at it," they say: "it is not all that we should expect; far from it." One points to what he calls "filthy litanies" in Leviticus; and another to the dark pages of the psalms called imprecatory; and another takes that song which seemed to hearts of old to give the burning sighs of the bride of Christ in her communion with Him, and talks of the Hebrew Vaudeville with the songs of its odalisques and the dance of its bayaderes; and another points to things in Ezekiel which, if they were fully understood, would cause the saint to sigh and the virgin to blush. Yes! but put this case on the other hand. Suppose any one in this congregation, acquainted with some daughter of sin who had fallen from the purity of her home; suppose that he is told about her that she has now got a Bible—that that Bible, with all these strange things in it, lies upon the poor woman's table—that she reads it from time to time. What will be his anticipation, what his certainty? He will feel sure that some day or other, sooner or later—probably very soon—tears will fall from her eyes which will wash the pearl-powder and the patch from her faded cheeks; and that through the fevered fingers big drops of penitence will rain down on the feet of Jesus.

Yes, there are strange histories connected with many copies of Bibles and Testaments. There are three which I may mention together. There is the New Testament of Bishop Ken—still, so many years after his death, opening of its own accord at the fifteenth chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians. There is the New Testament of the lyrical poet, Collins, of which Dr. Johnson tells us that he asked

to see the companion of a man of letters in times of toil and sorrow, and that Collins handed to him a New Testament, such as the children then carried to the village school, exclaiming, “I have but one book, but that book is the best of all.” And later on there is the New Testament of Alfred de Musset—that child of the sunshine and the storm—which the old servant, who attended faithfully upon him, gave to a friend who came to inquire about him, saying, “I know not what Alfred found in that book, but he always latterly had it under his pillow, that he might read it when he would.”

I will now only add at the close, that it seems to me that the text which I have read to you contains a summary of the Old and New Testaments; a summary of the New Testament in two words in the original—“He passed through doing good;”¹ a summary of the Old Testament in five words—“To Him give all the prophets witness.”²

¹ διῆλθεν εὐεργετῶν.

² Τούτῳ πάντες οἱ προφῆται μαρτυροῦσιν.

THE CHURCH'S STRUCTURE,
LIFE, AND GIFTS.

SERMON XII.¹

THE CHURCH'S STRUCTURE, LIFE, AND GIFTS.

“They continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.”—ACTS ii. 42.

“All these things happened unto them for ensamples.”—I COR. x. 11.

“All these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as He will.”—I COR. xii. 11.

On these occasions of our Church Congresses—may I dare to say that they are possibly just a little too frequent?—many earnest brethren of our clergy and laity meet together for counsel and help in the teeming Christian life of the Anglican Church in the nineteenth century—a life teeming alike in speculation and action. No one who looks at the list of subjects for this year or last can well charge those who are responsible with timidity or traditionalism. In this respect a change has come alike over our clergy and laity. For the clergy, compare the present generation with those of the last century and of the first quarter of this. We may remember the picture, drawn with Addison’s softest pencil, of Sir Roger de Coverley’s chaplain; or the description,

¹ Preached in St. Mary’s Church, Cardiff. Tuesday, October 1st, 1889.

laughingly but not unlovingly, given by the witty Canon of St. Paul's, of the country parson as one who by constantly living in one place became a sort of "sacred vegetable." The clergy, for good more than evil, are among the most locomotive, the most loquacious, the most speculative, the most experimental of English citizens. The laity who care for these subjects at all care for them very much. They are as far as possible from wishing to hear South, Barrow, Taylor, Tillotson, every Sunday. They demand, if not *nova*, at least *nové dicta*. A Church Congress must naturally reproduce these characteristics of the earnest clergy and laity of every branch of our community.

And of this feature of our Church Congresses we need not be much afraid. The solid metal which has stood the proof-charge of such tests as the Evangelical and Anglo-Catholic movements is not likely to burst with the loose powder of a Church Congress, though it may blaze and make a noise.

Yet, after all, now as ever—now, perhaps, more than ever—there are three forms of danger, against which we should be on our guard. In progress of time, in presence of keenly felt wants, something is plausibly proposed which is alien from, and inconsistent with, the Church's structural principles; some imperfect view is asserted of the Church's life; some narrow conception is formed of the Church's gifts.

On these three points I propose to speak this morning, starting in each case from one of the three passages of Scripture which I have read.

I. In our first text we have the original structural principles of the Church as the home of the baptized. They are four: (1) "The doctrine of the apostles." The

word rendered doctrine is somewhat unhappily exchanged for "teaching." No doubt it sometimes signifies act of teaching or mode of teaching. But here, and in many other places, it can mean nothing but the body and norm of faithful doctrine. By this all doctrine must be tested—"by the doctrine of the apostles." Advance in science is by progress; in theology by regress. In science the first propositions are true so far as they agree with the last developments; in theology the last developments are true so far as they agree with the first propositions. (2) "The fellowship"—*i.e.* the jointness, the community of life, of feeling, of method—the union in things sacred and ecclesiastical; the freedom from that *incivisme* which so ill beseems those who have been made citizens of the city of God. (3) "The breaking of the bread;" the constant participation in the central act of Christian worship. (4) "The prayers," joint, constant, public. And, as regards these two last, let it be noted that the fixity of the Church is not the fixity of a dead stake driven into the ground; it is the fixity of a tree with all the splendid play of its exultant life. Thus, as to "the bread," all art and symbolism in worship is the surrounding of the sacramental idea; the embodiment outwardly and materially of that which is spiritual; the efflorescence from the great sacramental stem.

Let us not fail to observe the conciliation, the equipoise, the free and spontaneous self-adjustment of elements too often separated by modern religionism. The great Christian thinker and preacher of Protestant Lausanne, as he compared the splendour and enthusiasm of the Roman Benediction with the shorn and meagre rite of Genevan Calvinism, exclaimed in melancholy tones—"Rome has worship without the word; we have the word without

worship." But the earliest Church, as delineated by its first historian, combines all these elements, and appeals to man through all his faculties. It appeals to his intellect by its doctrine. It awakens his social feelings—whether towards contemporary Christians, or spirits waiting in the world unseen, or great predecessors in the faith ; nay, something higher still—"and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ." Again, the Church deals with the soul in its most mysterious depths by the consciousness of a Presence at once awful and blessed. It has treasures of devotion ; and it opens to every one of its children a language of sobs and rapture, of penitence and joy—a wealth of words that set themselves to some far-off music, which linger along fretted roofs, yet nestle in our hearts, and in our last hours sing us into the sleep of death as if with the lullaby of God. Thus, as in the description of her first structure, the Church is doctrinal, social, sacramental, liturgical. She is a school of teaching, a centre of social unity, a shrine of sacraments, a home of worship. The child of heaven, destined to an inheritance so splendid, was strong and radiant in her cradle. All the possibilities of her history and of her being lay folded in her heart from the very first.

So far of the essential principles of the Church's structure. Indeed, the word "fellowship" includes things which may appear much lower, but with which the Church must prepare herself to deal—pauperism, as a social and commercial question ; strikes ; the better housing of the working classes ; thrift ; and recreation.

II. We may now pass on to that comprehensive view of the Church's life which is given to us in the opening section of the ninth chapter of the First Epistle to the

Corinthians. Looking at it generally, we may say that it presents the Church's life to us under a twofold aspect. It is guided by a divine book ; it is initiated and sustained by divine ordinances. In other words, it is Biblical and Sacramental.

I. The life of the Church is guided by a Divine book. It is Biblical.

Let us study St. Paul's way of using one important portion of Old Testament history.

A revelation to a being like man comes with peculiar propriety and force in the guise of a human history. If there were no sacred history, one of the most effective *media* for the transmission of revealed light would be wanting. As it is, much of this historical revelation is divinely interpreted. And thus the acts of men become a transparency through which we see the finger of God.

The mode at present in vogue of reading the Old Testament is entirely critical and literal. So, indeed, is the study of the New Testament. Picturesqueness is the modern substitute for spirituality. For instance, Galilee is a lake, and a beautiful one. And a large lake contains fish. The modern expositor paints the storm-light and the sunlight upon the waters as beautifully as he can ; he enumerates the kind of fish. This is very well in its way. But the evangelists aim at something higher. They forgot ichthyology in theology. The light to which they point the eyes of men is not of morning or evening, of star or storm, but of "the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." The old Puritan waxed fierce against the "word-warriors," who made the leaves of Scripture like those of the logicians. What of the world-painters under whose art the pages of

Moses or of St. John are no more spiritual than those of Macaulay?

Now, this mode of reading Scripture is exclusively critical and picturesque. Certainly it is not that of primitive Christianity. Consider the portion of sacred history with which St. Paul is dealing. How shall we read it? A true history, and so far to be read by aids of the same kind as other. But it is more: it is a divine history. A Christian reader, in studying it, should be like one walking down a gallery with strangely woven tapestries, wherein are hints and outlined indications of his own course. "Pharaoh stands for Satan, the Red Sea for baptism, the Rock is Jesus, the manna is the Bread of God, the water is the Cup of Salvation." So a score of Fathers in many a glowing page; so the simple painters of the catacombs in their rude but expressive colours.

A modern student looks up from his copy of the geological survey of the Sinaitic peninsula, and smiles or sighs. What about St. Paul? Just before our present passage he had been speaking of something pre-eminently Greek. But the tentmaker of Tarsus, the pupil of Rabbi Gamaliel, had not the true Hellenic instinct. He turns to something pre-eminently Hebrew. He hurriedly passes from the stadium, from the boxer, from the training, from the herald, from the crown—from the shapes of grace and strength, so delicate in symmetry, so unrivalled in power, lovely and majestic in the Grecian sunlight. "Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea." What an eternal significance there is for St. Paul in the Old Testament! How different the polished and artistic Corinth and its inhabitants from the rude wanderers

in the desert ! Yet the old story lingers on unexhausted. These things happened for them "typically ;" for us "with a view to our admonition."

Here I necessarily pause. How much more is there for the Christian in the Old Testament. Not merely the growth of the conception of eternal life ; the Messianic preparation ; the Christ in psalm and prophecy. The superior and cynical young man smiles at the simple Hebraism of his elders, as the Jew, cradled in Hebrew and breathing it from his nursery, perhaps smiles at him. The superior young man is of the school of Ewald. One Edward Bouverie Pusey was not simply of the school of Ewald, but his personal pupil. We will listen to you, when you have learnt as patiently and thought as much.

But if the life of the Church is thus Biblical ; if it has its roots in the Old Testament, how much more in the New ? We can but consider this in one department of the New Testament—that which contains what the Church emphatically speaks of as St. Paul's "holy doctrine."

What is that ? How is the Church's life necessarily involved in it ?

The doctrine called Pauline is not always a holy one—sometimes it is contaminated with Antinomianism ; the sectarian forgets the great short antithesis, "being not without law to God, but under law to Christ." Sometimes that which calls itself Pauline theology is an atrabilious, ferocious system which drives and damns ; which narrows the arms of Jesus, until one is tempted to cry, "as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are His thoughts higher than your thoughts." This doctrine is a holy doctrine, for two great reasons. (a) It teaches justification by faith, sanctification by grace. Do you say, "I fail to

see the connection"? Let me ask you whether, when this is forgotten, the Church's mutilated gospel does not produce a mutilated character and mutilated work? Survey first what may be called compendiously liberal Christianity. It has a superficial idea of sin and of holiness. It produces but a half-seriousness, a sort of worldliness tempered by theological speculation—or rather by critical study. It is thin and arid, clear and shallow. From its macadamized roads are none but commonplace views. The gospel is a respectable literature. Its preachers deliver sensible leading articles. It has no martyrs, no missionaries, no pastors, no saints; it has no sacred depths, no burning tears, no groanings that cannot be uttered. In all its churches there is no altar, in all its chambers no cross. Now from this turn to the opposite extreme, to the great Roman Catholic Communion. That system has the idea of sin, of holiness, of redemption. But it receives the wonderful Augustinian summary of St. Paul—"not grace from works, but works with grace"—with "public applause, but with secret reluctance" (one of Gibbon's few profound theological remarks). Where that Church prevails the Pauline doctrine is generally unknown. Therefore, in Roman Catholic countries, society may too clearly be divided into the frivolous and the fanatic—the frivolous many, for whom life has too much sunshine; the earnest few, for whom religion has too little, because they forgot that, "being justified by faith, we have peace with God through Jesus Christ our Lord." (b) Yet again St. Paul's is a "holy doctrine," because it teaches us present living union with a present Christ. There are three prepositions which characteristically and vitally are favourites with the three chiefest among the apostles—of St. Peter, with his ardent

character, stretching out from himself "unto" the future, *εἰς* is the favourite; with St. Paul, for whom all things are in harmony with a Divine law, after a great and gracious will, *κατά* is the preposition that recurs again and again; with St. John *ἐν* is the favourite; the mystical, spiritual abiding in Christ—the still, strong, sweet changelessness of a rooted life—the parable of the vine in two little letters. But with St. Paul also *ἐν* is a favourite in almost the same degree—"a man in Christ;" immanence in Him, following Him, is Paul's "holy doctrine," unapproachably brought out by the order of the Christian year from Christmas to Ascension Day.

2. But if the life of the Church is guided by a divine book, it is also initiated and sustained by divine ordinances. If it is Biblical, it is also Sacramental. St. Paul tells us the sweet and solemn story—"all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea; were all baptized with Moses in the cloud and in the sea; did all eat the same spiritual meat, and did all drink the same spiritual drink." They "drank," looked upon as one act; they "were drinking" from time to time. For the rock in Rephidim and the cliff in Kadesh¹ only bestowed the first and last gifts of the kind. Many another rock and cliff in that mysterious land, burning like a furnace in the blaze of day, was touched by a wondrous presence. "He brought streams also out of the rocks, and caused waters to run like rivers: He clave the rocks in the wilderness, and gave them drink as out of the great depths." St. Paul calls to his aid no vulgarizing touch of rabbinical legend; he amuses with no facile miracle of a perforated rock, that rolled along as they marched, like a beehive or barrel.

¹ Specially mentioned in Exod. xvii. and Numb. xx.

The water and the bread were “spiritual,” because given by the spiritual Presence of the spiritual Rock ever following with them, and that Rock was Christ. “*Qualis petra, talis aqua.*” The whole passage is sacramental to its very depths. The words in which it finally culminates speak of two sacraments, and two only—“by one Spirit were we all baptized into one body; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.”

Thus the Church’s life is a Sacramental life.

Now, beyond doubt this idea excites misgiving in not a few religious minds. It is rejected even passionately by men of singular devoutness. Let me refer to one cause out of many for this feeling among the masses of our people. It is the fatal prerogative of genius to fascinate and mislead. Genius liquefies the mind on which it acts by the intensity of passion which it applies, and stamps upon it an enduring conception which, when it once hardens, can scarcely be changed without the application of a similar heat and the action of a different stamp. Theology is no exception to the rule. How many of our obstinate mistakes about the Fall and Redemption may be traced to Milton! So with this matter of the spiritual life. For Englishmen there is an irresistible charm in Bunyan’s allegory, in his Land of Beulah and Delectable Mountains. In his allegory there are, I believe, only two dim and distant references to the Holy Communion.

It has been, I think very strangely, said that “if this be so as regards Bunyan, the charge is equally applicable to the New Testament—at least in the Epistles.” What of the passage before us? It is as if St. Paul read the Pentateuch by the light of the baptistery and of the east window. Under these two aspects he sees the life of the Church in

the desert and the life of the Church in the world. In the wondrous texture woven by the hand of the tentmaker there are two silver threads, one baptismal, the other Eucharistic. The "Pilgrim's Progress" of St. Paul corrects the "Pilgrim's Progress" of Bunyan.

It may be said to the preacher—"what lesson do you propose to draw for a gathering like the Congress from such an exposition?" I will reply frankly. There is a peculiar freedom in Congresses. There is a little rash talk and wild theory, as well as much wisdom and eloquence. Strange experiments are proposed by those who have scarcely measured the depth from which truth springs. Devout ears may be scandalized by the apotheosis of Mohammed, or by the deposition of the evangelists. Eloquent advocacy may win a hearing for very questionable speculations. Now, it may have a sobering effect to have the great lines of the Church's construction and life drawn out before us in the very beginning of our debates; and we may resolve to approve and admit nothing which is inconsistent therewith.

Above all, let us go away with the assured conviction that in our own system fairly carried out there is an unrivalled union of the Biblical element and the Sacramental element—the Bible lighting the mystery, the mystery tenderly shadowing the Bible.

On the first point, English Christians, on the whole, are happily agreed. The Bible is placed in the soldier's knapsack, in the sailor's chest, in the emigrant's trunk, among the bride's presents, inside the coffin. The greatest and best efforts of English scholarship have been devoted to the defence and elucidation of the New Testament; the Old Testament still calls for its Lightfoots and Westcotts, for another Pusey. Of all that can be said about that book, it

is more than worthy. Its beauty is like that of the Lake of Bourget, among the hills of Savoy. The traveller seems to see a blue strip of the Mediterranean which has become displaced, lying in storm or sunshine in its mountain-cup. What is the secret of that aerial colour, that intensity of azure, too deep for turquoise, too tender for sapphire? It is no colouring-matter in solution. It is the lustrous self-expression; it is the lovely self-investiture of depth, of transparency, of purity. Such is the beauty of the Bible, the beauty of the depth and transparency of its thoughts. Other books pass away; but of that the silver cord shall never be loosed, nor the golden bowl broken, nor the mourners that go about the streets proclaim that at last the great Book is dead, and carried to the charnel-house of dead religions. Let us interpret it still as St. Paul did. Let us show to those outside that nowhere is it so freely and entirely read in the ears of the people, nowhere so fully trusted, nowhere so deeply studied by the clergy. And withal let nothing make us ashamed to profess that, while we honour our separated brethren, and own their work for God, this is what we are set to do and witness—that alone among us, in Reformed Communions, are children taught that in baptism they are made children of God; that alone among us in confirmation, together with the grace of strength, young Christians are singly and specially brought into connection with the gifts of the Spirit; that alone among us it is proclaimed that the Body of Christ is “given, taken, eaten”—only after “a heavenly and spiritual manner”—while faith owns a Presence which she does not make, but perceives.

III. It remains to speak of the gifts of the Church, of which St. Paul, even while preparing to correct and chasten

any over-estimate, expresses such breathless admiration, as with kindling eye and quivering voice he contemplates their noble variety, in the beginning of the twelfth chapter of 1 Corinthians.

It seems to me that these gifts are capable of division into three classes, and of being translated into modern language. (1) Intellectual. To one, the word of wisdom ; to another of the same class¹ the word of knowledge—*i.e.* the theologian's complete grasp of the revealed truth ; the more acute, perhaps, but less comprehensive application of religion in its practical details. (2) In a different class,² in another department, that of faith. To one, faith in its intensity for personal salvation ; to another in the same class,³ grace, gifts connected with healing and comfort even for the bodies of men ; to another, some discovery of the capabilities inherent in his new life ; to another, some of the ever-fresh developments of the life given by the Spirit, some fore-speaking or forth-speaking, some standing in the foreground and speaking out from and of the dawn ; to another, the true critical tests by which principles are tried, so necessary in a world where good and evil are intermingled, and the serpent hisses in the same brake where the wild bird sings. (3) Yet a third and different class,⁴ which brings some in contact with other and rarer gifts, “kinds of tongues.” Shall we say that this has passed away ? Nay, in a living Church are there no “gifts of healings” ? Is there no such thing as educated tenderness, as strength and beauty bowing down for Christ's sake before decrepitude and decay ? “To one of a different class⁵ kinds of tongues ; to another of the same class⁶ interpretation of tongues.” So

¹ ἀλλαφ.

⁴ ἀλλαφ.

² ἐπέρφ.

⁵ ἐπέρφ.

³ ἀλλφ.

⁶ ἐπέρφ.

long as Christianity has varied expression in the language of art, of poetry, of music, of philosophy ; so long as there is excellent exposition of the darkest and deepest utterances of inspired men and Heaven-taught thinkers ; so long the Church will not want a real glossology. To these gifts the Church has never entirely surrendered her claim. To all who will receive it confirmation is offered by the chief pastors of the Church. The earliest confirmations were accompanied by gifts as well as graces. For these we still pray—"daily increase in them Thy manifold gifts of grace." Strip some strong arm—look at the knotted muscles. Are the varied energies of which the arm is capable the work of the muscles? The muscles are but the *media* of a real but unseen influence. The nerves unlock and stiffen the muscles ; and behind them is the will, without which the muscles would be but a lump of gristle. So with the Church's arm—all these workings are the result not of the muscles and nerves of the human organization, but of the inworking, the energy of a living Will, of an Almighty Personal Force. "All these inworketh the one and the same Spirit, distinguishing to each severally as He willeth." No living Church will want the "reserve of young enthusiasm ;" the knight-errantry of the Cross, single or in community.

IV. There is one application of that which has been said which may come naturally from an Irish bishop.

What of Disestablishment?

Politically little can come from one who stands in this place. It may, however, be remarked that you in Wales will probably meet with counsellors of two opposite classes. One of these are political fatalists. They hold that in democratic England the party of attack is necessarily

stronger than the party of defence, who have nothing to do but yield on the best terms which they can procure. Another class inculcates a manlier lesson. They discover elements of hope that you are much stronger than we were in 1867-69. The Church in Wales has more rational prospect of becoming national in the popular sense than the Irish Church. The language of the leader of the attack is measured and doubtful. These friends urge Welsh Churchmen to be up and doing—to enlist every voter—to press forward every argument, remembering that they are custodians of a great deposit for ages unborn. And we, of the Irish Church, bid you God-speed, not only for your own sake, but for that of England, and of the world.

But if that which you wish not comes to pass; if death come at last, in her merely human aspect, to her who is “killed all the day long,” do not despair. Deign, some of you, as your father so often did in the days of Giraldus Cambrensis, to cross the sixty miles of stormy water between the Principality and Ireland. Forget some of our rash words, and inspect some of our wise works. The hill up which our little host must march is steep, and the hail beats in our faces. We hear the steady tramp of the serried ranks of Rome round us; the shout of the marauders of Plymouth rises, as they, ever and anon, cut off a few stragglers. We draw close, and grip our muskets harder. Above us is the strong city crowned with light, and the sweet rest, where the old soldier may lie down with his white head pressed upon the pillow, until the morning wakens him with the storm of triumph sweeping along the streets. Churchmen of Wales! fall back on something above Parliaments and establishments. “Her foundations

are upon the holy hills. Very excellent things are spoken of thee, thou city of God." On your high hills and lovely valleys full often the Church's children are but a little flock. Yet fear not; for even so weak a voice as mine sounds in your ears these three great thoughts. The Church's unchanging structure in doctrine, in association, in Eucharist, in Liturgy. The Church's undying life in creed and sacrament. The Church's gifts. "A shower of freenesses wilt thou shake out," as the inspired poet sings, seeing Christ's robe moving like a cloud along the hills, shaking out showers, of which each drop is a baptism of benediction. And, O brethren of the clergy, "covet earnestly the best gifts. Yet show I unto you a more excellent way," the way taught (as St. Bernard says), "not by learning, but by unction; not by science, but by conscience."¹ The apostle's great heart is on fire, and borne on to his psalm of love. Ask God for that. Feel and speak with him who said, "I will very gladly spend and be spent for you, though the more abundantly I love you the less I be loved." All true love possesses a microscope and a key. The microscope brings out with a Divine delicacy the finest lines of duty; the key opens the stiffest heart by its magic touch. Without these, gifts are vain. With these is the only victory worth having—the victory of the Cross.

¹ "Non scientiâ sed conscientiâ."

THE BENEDICTION OF THE
BISHOP AND OF THE SAINT.

SERMON XIII.¹

THE BENEDICTION OF THE BISHOP AND OF THE SAINT.

“ Speak unto Aaron and unto his sons, saying, On this wise ye shall bless the children of Israel, saying unto them, The Lord bless thee, and keep thee: the Lord make His face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: the Lord lift up His countenance upon thee, and give thee peace. And they shall put My Name upon the children of Israel; and I will bless them.”—NUMB. vi. 23-27.

ON this memorable day, when an Irish Primate of England for the first time in the long history of the see of York takes possession of that august chair, and when an Irish national saint is commemorated, an Irish Bishop has been invited to address you. Through him the Church of St. Patrick sends greeting to him who defended her so nobly in a day of darkness. From that crisis she has emerged “cast down, but not destroyed.” She lives on with that Pentecostal life which no Act of Parliament ever gave, and which no Act of Parliament can ever take away.

The text contains two elements—one rubrical, the other spiritual—as is so often the case with Divine rubrics, the spiritual fitting into and rising from the rubrical. The rubrical

¹ Preached in substance at the enthronement of the Right Hon. and Most Rev. William C. Magee, D.D., Archbishop of York, in York Minster, March 17th, 1891, being St. Patrick's Day.

.... “Came the Fury with his horrid shears”
“And let the thunspell life”

passes on in its essence to the Church ; one function of the priesthood, and more especially of the Episcopate, is to bless. But beneath this is the principle of the influence for good of man upon man, the fact of the abiding influence of the saints—abiding, for it is not local or temporary. Again and again, when darkness gathers round a generation, eyes are opened, and through the spectral gloom a thin hand is lifted, whose shadowy fingers act as conductors to bring down the fire of God the Holy Ghost upon the sacrifice. And the people once more, as in the days of old, fall upon their faces and worship.

Let us meditate to-day upon this twofold blessing—the benediction of the Bishop and the benediction of the Saint.

I. The benediction of the Bishop. There are various kinds of blessing in Scripture. Sometimes God blesses man—with Him benediction and benefaction are one. “They shall put My Name upon the children of Israel ; and I will bless them.” Sometimes man blesses God. In bridal moments of the soul we isolate one of His attributes. Our spirits are touched by one living wire, bound to His throne, not for death but for life. Sometimes God blesses impersonal material objects, and the dark leaden mass of fatality becomes transparent and buoyant. Sometimes man blesses such objects. The sacramental elements are consecrated and fitted for being the *media* of grace.

Sometimes, again, man blesses man. This is even a natural recognition of the spiritual law of the influence for good of man upon man. And the highest ceremonial form of this is the ministerial (above all, the Episcopal) blessing.

There are two points here to be noted—

I. This benediction is one great function of the revealed

priesthood. The first mysterious priest-king, who brought forth bread and wine, blessed Abraham. Of the four defined works of Aaron and his sons this is one—"to bless in His Name for ever."¹

In the Psalms let us not lose sight of the very shortest. The hundred and thirty-fourth psalm is no mere lifeless ritual chip, accidentally splintered off. It is a psalm of vigil. An awakened laity speaks to an earnest priesthood. The priests are set in their night-watches. Up through the sultry air, over the sleeping city, rose the words, which seem to set themselves to some old chant:—

"Behold ! bless the Lord, all ye servants of the Lord,

"Which by night stand in the house of the Lord.

"Lift up your hands in the sanctuary, and bless ye the Lord."

And then, in answer, the benediction floats down from Sion for all the people, as if for one man—

"The Lord give thee blessing out of Sion."

2. Even if it be said (and not with complete truth) that there is no formal benediction in the New Testament,² one principle should be remembered—every great ministry as if instinctively ends with blessing.

Take the great Life as it is drawn in St. Luke's Gospel in its priestly aspect. The third Gospel begins with the cloud of incense, and with the people waiting for a priest to come forth and bless them. How does it end? No longer the white Christ nailed to the cross, with the

¹ "And Aaron was separated, that he should *sanctify* the most holy things, he and his sons for ever, to *burn incense* before the Lord, to *minister* unto Him, and to *bless* in *His Name* for ever." (1 Chron. xxiii. 13.)

² "And into whatsoever house ye enter, first say, Peace be to this house." (Luke x. 5.)

awful crown, and the pale and dying lips. "He lifted up His hands, and blessed them. And it came to pass, in blessing them, He was parted from them." Does not the old rubric of the text stand before us illuminated with no dead sapphire or gold-stiffened form, but with the radiant shape and the blue of heaven—"the great High Priest which is passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God."¹

Again, we find this kind of instinctive benediction in the Apostolic Epistles.

We read one of these Epistles as Englishmen have learned to read them under the guidance of two great Bishops of your Northern Province. Some one of those great letters draws to its close. Over all the dogma, over all the pathos, and tenderness, and majesty of it; after all the sentences, where the frail mould of language cracks and splinters under the intensity of intellectual and spiritual life with which it is charged and overcharged; at the end of all that rain of fire and tears; as the author dictates his spirit seems to pass over lands and seas. Though absent in the body, he is present in their assembly. His heart swells, his hand is lifted up, his blessing rings out.

Take, for instance, that noble and exuberant benediction towards the close of the Epistle to the Hebrews. St. Luke, or whoever the author may have been, cries,—"pray for us." A few lines more, and then, as if he heard their intercessions, he bursts out with a passion of enthusiasm, with a depth of thought, with an intensity of feeling, with an opulence of dogmatic truth. He gives them back the mist of their prayers in a rain of benediction. "The God

¹ "Ἐχοντες οὖν ἀρχιερέα μέγαν, διεληλυθότα τὸν οὐρανούς, Ἰησοῦν τὸν νιόν τοῦ Θεοῦ." (Heb. iv. 14.)

² Heb. xiii. 20, 21.

of peace make you perfect in every good thing, to do His will, doing in you that which is well pleasing in His sight."

II. We speak next of the benediction of the Saint.

This is a benediction which lasts long after his death. About sixty years ago an ancient reliquary—truly or falsely said to contain the arm and hand of St. Augustine—was carried by the French to the old city of the saint's episcopate. The relic was held up by the Archbishop of Algeria, and the blessing pronounced by him. This was at best a materialized type of the spiritual principle of the influence of the saint after death. The crumbling arm and parchment-like fingers are not the conveyancers of the gift.

In the case of St. Patrick the influence was not conveyed by writing. His literary remains are scanty. He had not the passionate tenderness, the metaphysical subtlety, the power of packing a library of controversial theology into the nutshell of an epigram, possessed by Augustine. His was not the splendid and coloured glow of Chrysostom's oratory. A few pages of "Confessions," a fierce remonstrance with a Welsh chieftain upon foul wrong done to some of his children in Christ ; almost certainly the hymn, called the "Breastplate," which you will presently hear, originally composed in strange old Irish and rendered into rustic Latin—there is no more that we may claim for him.

Yet how much of the Christian life streams in through these rude pages ! The bitterness of purity lost ; the sweetness of purity regained ; the love of prayer which sent him by day and even by night into the woods and hills ; the conviction of the misery of souls who know not Christ, so that he seemed to see the form of an Irishman coming to him out of "the bosom of the night" and presenting him with letters, the bitter cry indeed of the Irish nation ; the

sense that Christ was speaking in him, and the Spirit turning the very strings of his heart into an instrument of intercession ; the ever-abiding expectation of judgment (from which modern religion considers it saintship to be exempt). In those of his writings and actions which we may assume to be indubitable we can trace a creed, strong as granite and clear as crystal—the Holy Trinity, the mystery of the Incarnation, the unity of the Church, the gifts of baptism and confirmation, the Eucharist of God.

Some may ask—“ what is this rude Irish saint to us ? ” Something ; perhaps much.

This spirit or influence of a saint may appear indefinite and mystic, but it survives and acts on with a tenacity which is wanting in things apparently more definite. St. Augustine, beautifully if fancifully, applies a verse in a psalm to St. John—“ The mountains shall bring peace, and the little hills righteousness unto the people.”¹ The old man, with the sunlights and shadows of the African hills before his eyes, cried to his people, who had so often seen the pageant of the dawn upon the Atlantean range—“ The mountains are great souls like John, the little hills are common souls like ours. Never should we have received the lights of faith had not the great mountain-tops, lit up by the heavenly wisdom, passed them on to us.”²

Mountain to mountain, and hill to hill, when the light dawns ! Columba was born within fifty years of St. Patrick’s death at Gartan, in my diocese of Raphoe. His life has lately been told by two eminent Bishops of Durham, and by a learned Dublin professor of ecclesiastical history. He was a saint far more intensely Irish than Patrick—“ a Celt of the Celts.” From Patrick to Columba, from

¹ Ps. lxxii. 3.

² St. August., “Enarr. in Ps. lxxii.”

Columba to Aidan ; and how much light has been thrown upon England ! For England had a Celtic mission before the Roman mission ; and it was only in the year of Columba's death that Augustine landed in Kent. As we survey England, two great propositions stand out before us.¹ "Rome succeeded where Iona failed." I do not mean in her successful assertion of the cut of the tonsure, and the day of the observation of Easter, though her triumph sent Colman to die with a broken heart in his island mists. But without this Roman influence England and England's Church would, it must be confessed, have lost much. Without this the elevating contact with art must have been long delayed. We might not have had this glorious Minster and other cathedrals, whose two aspects of active work and silent beauty remind us of a great writer's saying about nature. They at once work with such interlacing wheels, and sleep with such splendid dreams upon their lifted faces. Nor, again, without this Roman influence would diocesan and parochial organization have been so early or so perfect. For the Celt, in some respects so highly gifted, has unhappily a genius for anarchy. He is not only "devoid of unifying power,"² but he has an unrivalled faculty for creating temporary organizations in order to destroy permanent organization. The second great proposition is that "Iona succeeded where Rome failed." For the Christian Celt has the high spiritual instincts which will never allow him to imprison the eternal truth in forms. In earlier times he had learned from the great saints of his race to love Scripture with a passionate love. His nature disliked the terrible drill of the Italian ecclesiastical barrack-

¹ Bishop Lightfoot.

² Archbishop Trench, "Medieval Church History."

yard. Above all; the breath that blew over the hills of Donegal, the spray of the tides that tumbled upon Iona and Lindisfarne, baptized him into the spirit of liberty. They made him understand livingly the words written by St. Paul to a Celtic Church—"stand fast in the freedom wherewith Christ freed you."¹ This influence—partly at least inherited from the Celtic school of Columba and Aidan—was one of those which made the English Reformation possible. Your great English Church did not begin at the Reformation. It was originally formed in Britain by apostolic men, and furthered by the Celtic and by the Roman missions. It was deformed by foreign influences. It was reformed by various movements, good and evil. Its object was renovation, not innovation; recurrence to first principles, not adoption of new principles. Nations and Churches, when the fierce blood of revolution is coursing through their veins, may keep or cut the fibres which connect them with the root of the past. But the Church, like the nation, which renounces its past, renounces also its future.

An Irish Archbishop taking his seat in that great and ancient chair is a pledge—is it not?—of the union of hearts. It is also a pledge of something more. In the year 665 Chad was ordained and consecrated Archbishop of York at Canterbury. As a youth he was trained under Celtic influence by Aidan. Now once more we have before us, living and breathing, the Celtic, the Roman, and the British elements all represented.

Finally, the Bishop's blessing reminds us that his ministry is a ministry of peace. Surely, above all things, this is needful in a great national Church. The English

¹ Gal. v. 1. *Galat.* is connected with *Celt.*

Episcopate has ever been a ministry of peaceful mediation—mediating in forms between too much and too little—in doctrines between different theories of the same Divine facts, so long as the facts themselves are held fast; mediating between divided religious communions; speaking to them with a teaching of almost penitential tenderness; recognizing all the work they have done for Christ in individual religion—yet unfalteringly holding to a better method and the connection with a corporate and historic organization. The spirit of the English Episcopate has ever carried on the genuine tradition of English Christianity apart from excess or defect. So it was in bad times, a century or more ago, of a slumbering priesthood, a silken prelacy, and a laity who seemed to be silent, but who were muttering sullenly in their sleep. Then there was in the pulpits of England, generally speaking, a theology—it might have been in the hands of some masters wonderfully precise—but pale, pulseless, pedantic, legal, prosaic. The very word of God stalked rather than ran, and was patronized rather than glorified. There was abroad a spirit which would have received a House of Laymen as playing at Disestablishment—though the English language at that time was fortunate enough not to possess the word—playing at Disestablishment upon the verge of a jungle haunted by theological tigers.

My Lord Archbishop, on this great day it has seemed good to those who rule in this diocese and place not merely to have forms venerable rather than beautiful. A great volume of intercession is this day going up to the Throne of God for you. If I might venture to say it, perhaps you have known moments of more joy than this—pure and full as it is. Yours—for truth must speak—has been a great

gift. Not only rhetoric guided by the severest logic has given you a sway over your fellow-men. Souls—living souls—are your witness. Hundreds there are who can say that often they have heard through you the message of a Father's pity, the message of Divine love that inspires a Divine life. You, more than most men, have known those hushed and pregnant moments when in great churches a thousand beating hearts make that strange silence, and a thousand sinful and world-worn faces have turned towards you with the soft look of a little child. They have heard some word of Christ coming a little nearer to the hearts of men. They have felt as if over the vulgarity and meanness of these sordid and material lives of ours there were the azure depths and the golden distances ; and their eyes have seen the King in His beauty, and the land that is very far off ; and pardon and peace and holiness have seemed things that were very near to them. The discipline of trial has been yours. There are hundreds, I suppose, in this congregation who remember the time when, without exaggeration, it might have been said that the whole English-speaking Church hung over what was supposed to be your dying bed, and gentle hands were clasped in yours, and you were prayed back to a life that was to have so great an issue. Other trials, too, there must have been during a long Episcopate—cares, troubles, oppositions, misunderstandings. Yes ! for all men who have to speak much, and whose words are worth much, must sometimes say things which are capable of being misunderstood and misrepresented. Our rough north of Ireland proverb says—“ the high wind is for the high hill.” In dealing with this vast diocese and with the crowded masses barricadoed in the streets of large towns ; in dealing with those social problems the solution of which seems to be

at once necessary and impossible ; it may be in storms, to which I will not further refer, in the political world—all in this congregation, and all who will crowd the nave this afternoon, will pray that God's help and strength may be with their Archbishop. Yes, it is the part of the Bishop or of the priest to speak to men about peace, but God Himself only can speak peace.¹ So our prayer is that you may be guided and sustained by the strength of that everlasting peace ; that when the time comes when the steward of this great flock may give his account, the words of the old rubric of benediction may be fulfilled, and we may only have to change a single word of a single verse—“thou *hast* put My Name upon My people, and I have blessed them.”

¹ Ps. lxxxv. 8.

FIDELITY; DEVELOPMENT;
PEACE.

SERMON XIV.¹

FIDELITY; DEVELOPMENT; PEACE.

WORDS OF COUNSEL TO THE CLERGY AND LAITY OF A DISESTABLISHED CHURCH.

“And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body.”—COL. iii. 15.

AT this exigent crisis you will not be surprised if a Bishop of the Irish Church ventures to lay before you some considerations upon the prospects of Protestantism in Ireland, and our special duty in view of those prospects. What is the prospect of our Reformed Church and of Protestantism in Ireland? Let me read to you some sentences originally delivered, not far from this spot, in the hearing of a good many now present—“As far as financial considerations are concerned, this hope must, of course, be a contingent one. We are dependent upon the liberality of the members of our Church; and if the course of events impoverishes the landed gentry, or forces them to sell their estates, the prospect is gloomy. It is our sad lot to live in a land of ruins. In other days statesmen were

¹ Delivered before the Diocesan Synod of Derry and Raphoe October 21, 1890.

considered great by creating or consolidating institutions. The tree was admired for its stately growth ; but now 'a man is famous according as he has lifted up axes upon the thick trees.' The landed interest appears to be under the same doom as that which twenty-one years ago impended over the Church Establishment. The ashes of the furnace of disestablishment sprinkled towards heaven in 1869 have become the small dust of Communism in all the land. Some will think that these are the pessimist reflections or prophecies of a man 'growing old in his enemy's day.' But pessimists, like optimists, if often wrong, are sometimes right ; and the pessimists in the case of Ireland have been right for half a century,—right after Catholic Emancipation, after the Act of Disestablishment, after the Land Bill of 1870. The presumption is, that they may be right again. We live, I repeat it, in a land of ruins, that have no history and no beauty—the ignoble trophies of statesmen who legislate in passion or in panic ! The ruined glebe-house and the alienated Church lands may soon have in their neighbourhood ruined mansions, and broad acres parcelled out in small lots between impoverished peasants." This was spoken on July 8, 1881, at a Visitation of the Clergy of this united diocese. The sentences brought down upon their author some little animadversion. One respected organ spoke of the "dismal jeremiad of the Bishop of Derry." Looking back upon the nine years that have elapsed, the Bishop of Derry ventures to ask whether his jeremiad has not at least proved partly true. Many of us no doubt read in the *Times*, last month, a correspondence between two very able writers—Sir William Gregory and a gentleman who adopted the signature of "Irish Protestant." The heading selected by the editor of the *Times* was

ominous—"deprotestantizing Ireland." The question directly at issue between the writers does not concern us now. But at the close of Sir William Gregory's letter we find this startling passage—"If your correspondent had stated that the effects of Home Rule would be the expulsion of Protestantism from three out of the four provinces of Ireland, except in the large towns, I should agree with him, but I should not allow that this result would follow from hatred of Protestants, but from the expulsion of the landed gentry, who happen to be chiefly Protestant, by the sale of their landed property. The conversion of the tenants into proprietors is both inevitable and desirable, but the consequences which I indicate must follow. With the expropriation of the landed Protestant gentry would, of course, depart their many ordinary adherents, and there would not remain the means, in the vast majority of parishes, of supporting a clergyman and a church. Without a congregation they would not be needed. But this will arise, not from priestly hatred, but from social changes, approved of by the Parliament of the United Kingdom." Sir William Gregory's antagonist replies by admitting this as a proof of his particular contention. He afterwards incidentally quotes from a letter by a distinguished Unionist member, Mr. T. W. Russell, M.P.—"All over the South and West of Ireland the story is the same. Protestantism is simply being squeezed out. All the three Protestant denominations are feeling it. I know case after case where men, long the very salt of the district where they lived, have packed up and left rather than submit to these tolerant friends of Sir Charles Russell. The census will tell a tale in this respect." In the opinion, then, of these three acute observers events are rapidly tending to one consummation. The day is

within measurable distance when Protestantism in general, and our Church in particular, strong upon the whole in Ulster, will be non-existent in the other three provinces, except in congregations weak and isolated in country places, powerful in the larger towns. The language of the writers just quoted is surely somewhat too sweeping and alarmist. No doubt, upon the expropriation of a majority of the landed gentry, the departure of their adherents and dependents will follow at no long interval. Still, it seems certain that not a few even of those who sell their estates will retain homes which are endeared to them by all the memories of the past. In many parishes there are Protestant farmers who will cling tenaciously to their homesteads. Yet, after all these deductions, it is only too likely that there will be an ecclesiastical upheaval, and that many parishes may be blotted out as organized institutions in the South and West of Ireland. This may not be encouraging, but there is no necessity for a dismal jeremiad. Here in Ulster, at all events, we shall have a splendid representation of gentry, commercial men, mechanics, farmers, and peasants.

Suffer me briefly to put before you our most evident and imperative duties.

The first comes very close to us. In remote parishes of Donegal, for instance, there are weak outlying congregations which we should exert ourselves to keep within the lines of our system. These feeble outposts must not be driven in or pushed into the sea. It was my lot to hold a Confirmation, on the 30th July last, in a wild peninsular parish of Donegal—Lettermacaward. When the late incumbent died a notice was posted on the church door, to the effect that “the last Protestant minister of Lettermacaward was dead, and his Church with him.” That prophecy,

largely owing to the efforts of Archdeacon Cox towards purchasing the glebe, is falsified, for the present at least. Now the peninsula contains about a hundred and fifty members of our Church, entirely of a poor or struggling class, and, from its peculiar position, cannot possibly be worked except by a resident clergyman. On the occasion of my visit the little church was crammed, and seventeen sturdy sons and daughters of toil were confirmed. I am convinced that a moderate sum of money devoted to ensuring a decent maintenance for continuing the steadfast ministry of the Word among the worthy people of the parish to which I refer, and of others like it, will do greatly more for the cause of the Reformed faith than any new and untried agency. It is my hope that I may be able to make an appeal to English Churchmen to assist in providing a moderate permanent endowment for several such parishes in Raphoe. Whatever be the result of that appeal, a duty is laid upon us which we shall have to face.

My second suggestion is one of a more general character. It is simply this, that the Church, if unhappily contracted in numbers, should at least worthily represent her sacred cause. I must plainly ask the question—*has* that cause been adequately represented in the past? Bear with me while I attempt a summary answer to a melancholy question. We had for long generations, so far as externals were concerned, bald services and ugly churches. We had too often private opulence and public penury. Ecclesiastically we did not make a favourable impression, either in Ireland or elsewhere. Not elsewhere, for English Churchmen complained of our isolation, of our sectarianism, of our want of light and sweetness. Nor even in Ireland did we make a favourable impression. The imaginative Celt found no spiritual home

in the system which we presented to him for the awe, the mystery, the yearning tenderness, the quivering emotionalism of his nature. The Celt, if deficient in a refined sense of beauty, as his ecclesiastical history proves, is at least repelled by the presence of its opposite. An imaginative nature could scarcely take an instinctive delight in the style of architecture invented by the staff of the late Ecclesiastical Commissioners. On the other hand, the more matter-of-fact Scotch colonist found little attraction in us from his point of view. He preferred (very sensibly) Presbyterianism concentrated and undiluted in his own place of worship to Presbyterianism-and-water in the parish church of the Establishment. Thus the ship of the Irish Church, like that which carried the great Apostle, was hopelessly run aground in a place where two seas met. It was too Puritan in practice for the Catholic, too Catholic in theory for the Puritan. For the last century and more it bore the rigid features of an Erastianism, which only flushed and softened into a sweeter life under the influence of the Evangelical revival. And now we naturally ask—Was the old plan successful? What has it to show for itself? If we look along the shelves of our theological libraries they can show names which will never die, as long as men employ sanctified reason upon the Word of God. If we question our memories and the traditions of our homes, it has produced many pastors and preachers whose names are written in the book of life. But if we ask for the net result upon a large scale of its working in this respect, combined, of course unintentionally, with powerful political influence, it has been this—a reduced episcopate, an alienated England, an establishment in ruins, a gentry in *deliquium*, a Protestantism in agony.

May it not be wise to ask ourselves whether, taught by bitter experience, we had not better rectify our method, lest haply the same causes which have ruined our Establishment should ruin our Church also ?

The advice which I have to offer may be summed up in three words—fidelity, development, unity. (1) By fidelity I mean fidelity to our own religious and ecclesiastical system—*i.e.* to that of which we are members, and not to some other system, however worthy of respect in many ways. (2) Our development must be a loyal development, strictly upon our own principles and within our own lines. We must, indeed, aim at fixity. But the fixity of the Christian Church is not the fixity of a dead stake, but of a living tree. (3) My third recommendation is a peaceful, tolerant, unsuspicious temper. Let us rise to the dignity of Christian manhood and put away childish things. Let our spirit be that of the evangelist St. John, and not a feeble imitation of Dr. Titus Oates. Let us treat each other with mutual respect, and with a loving toleration which embraces all that is tolerated by our Church. Let me suggest one important application of this principle. In the case of those whose names are before a board of nomination, the one question on which some nominators concentrate their attention, which they say the parish insists upon their asking, is—“of what theological party is the candidate ; to what section does he belong ; is he an evangelical in the party sense of the word ?” Let us remember two things. In these days (believe me, for I speak what I know) the reflective student for Holy Orders passes through a sort of probation unknown in the past generation. He is brought into contact with the thought of the Church of all ages. A certain number of minds are confirmed in, a certain number adopt, what

are technically known as Evangelical principles—for it is not insinuated that no highly gifted mind becomes or remains deeply evangelical. God forbid. But it is certain that, perhaps by a considerable majority, the intellects of gifted students are drawn in other directions. Many of them are hurried by the deep, strong current of modern thought and criticism in the direction of what is called Broad Church. Others, again, penetrated by the spirit of antiquity, filled with a majestic conception of the visibility and continuance of the Church, become what is called High Church. Whether we like it or dislike it, this is a simple fact known to every educated theologian. Now, will it be seriously maintained that among the not too many men of independent means and high education, who in a spirit of self-sacrifice devote themselves to the work of our ministry, you should deliberately set yourself to weed out those who on the whole are the most hopeful candidates? Many of the best men will not make any profession of party. How often has one known young men, whom we ought to wish to retain, shaking off the dust of their feet against parishes? What they have practically said is this—"we do not greatly object to the narrow stipend ; we can face social isolation ; we will sacrifice much, but there is one thing which we will not sacrifice—our convictions. In such a parish we shall evidently be pursued by restless suspicion if we attempt to conform the low ecclesiastical standard which we find existing to our conception of duty." I do not say that this is altogether right. It might be better and manlier to face the difficulty. But I am telling you the simple fact. Remember that nicknames are potent engines. All improvement is capable of being called innovation. When we go back, not to mediævalism, but to primitive antiquity, we may easily be

called innovators. But for how many of us does primitive antiquity simply mean the time when we were boys? Observe, also, that for the higher ends of the ministry this question of party denomination is almost useless. The real question is not—will a man say this thing or that thing at the dictation of a clique? but—is he honest, is he pure, is he pious, is he hard-working? If he is not, his views may be called by any denomination of extension, but a blessing to his flock he never will be. If a clergyman is honestly a Churchman, has honestly made up his mind to serve the Church of Ireland, his character is ten times more important than any jealous inspection of his views. A shipwreck is not less a shipwreck because the captain flies a showy flag.

Let me conclude by reminding you that we live in an age not only of restless analysis, but of increasing demand upon the practical resources of the Christian Church. Old things are passing away, in a certain sense, in theology itself—*i.e.* the mere traditions of the Middle Ages, of the Reformation, of the Georgian era, are passing away. Yes! things comparatively old are passing away. But the oldest things shall never pass away. The shibboleths, the catchwords, the anathemas of past generations, are beginning to lose the passionate interest which they once possessed. Mere theories and metaphysical speculations about Divine facts are melting away; only the Divine facts themselves remain. Theories of the Atonement, which shock alike the reason and the heart, have become obsolete; the Atonement itself lives with the living Christ, with the willing self-sacrifice of the Incarnate God. Theories of inspiration which impaginate the everlasting Spirit, and make each verse a cluster of objectless and mechanical miracles, are not seriously believed by any one; the Bible itself abides in its endless power and

unexhausted truth. All that is not of asbestos is being burned away by the restless fires of thought and criticism. That which remains is enough, and it is indestructible. All that is contained in the Creeds (which are the expression of the mind of undivided Christendom, which are as necessary for true religious teaching as the multiplication table for arithmetical teaching) continues as in the days of old, and in the former years. The fatherhood of God ; the divinity, incarnation, atoning death, and glory of our Lord Jesus Christ ; the Holy Ghost the Sanctifier ; three Persons in one God ; the Holy Catholic Church, with its simple majestic organization and sacraments ; the pardon of sins, the resurrection of the body, the life eternal ;—these Articles form the irreducible *minimum* of belief. Before the New Testament itself was collected, or even written, these truths were expressed in forms more or less varied—compacted and welded in the shape so familiar to us in the West in the Creed which is called the Apostles' Creed—expanded, as need arose, into the fuller music and more splendid dogmatism of the Nicene Creed with its additions. Without the accretions of mediæval superstition, without the perplexing scholasticism of certain modern Protestant schools—this is the basis on which Christian faith is resting more and more entirely. Concurrently with this, partly its cause, partly its effect, gifted men are teaching those who are able to read the New Testament in the original by methods at once simpler and more effectual than at any other period in the history of the Church. Half the things read by later generations into the text of the New Testament shrivel away before the simple secret of honestly studying just what the sacred writers really did say—*i.e.* by coming to learn from our Lord and the apostles, not to

teach them. There need be no fear of the result. Some of us, perhaps, once thought that the fabric which stood for so many ages would lose its completeness. But, lo ! it stands out with a diviner glory—

“ From the rock, as if by magic grown,
Eternal, silent, beautiful, alone.”

We thought that the weapon would be blunted. No ! The swift play and fierce thrust of the sword of the Spirit pierces the soul more sharply and more directly when the button is off the point. In this simple, severe, sublime school of theology, not in an obsolete sectarianism, our clergy must be trained, unless our Church is to become like an anchored boat that does but show the rapidity of the current that is running past it. This, and not the pronouncing of a shibboleth, is what you, my brethren of the laity, should desire your ministers to face.

Yet, again, contemporaneously with this way of examining the Divine truth, the masses of a growing population in all Christian countries are calling upon the Church to descend from the metaphysics, even from the dogmas of Christianity, and to show how its ethics bear upon the science of sociology, which is growing into such vast proportions. We speak to the masses of the divinity of the Christian religion ; they demand of us to prove its humanity. “ Show us,” they say, “ that you know something of these homes of ours in the smoke, and we will believe you more readily when you tell us of a home in the blue of heaven ; show us that you understand our cares and sorrows, and we shall more easily make our act of faith in One of whom we can say that He is the Man of my sorrow, and your sorrow, and of every heart’s sorrow.” The old controversies have thus lost nine-tenths of their vital interest.

They no longer profoundly affect—at least they are ceasing to affect—the masses of men. It is not, of course, meant that there has ceased to be a true and a false, that there is not a “yes” or a “no” in matters of controversy. But comparatively few enter upon the question, except those who are deeply concerned in it, and who are willing really to study it. The generation which is about to take our place will certainly judge the Church by her works. The influence which softens, which brightens, which elevates, which improves, which sweetens, which does something for human society, which lays its subtle touch of healing upon the leprosy of life, will be welcomed—first as a friend, ultimately as a messenger of Christ. That which screams, which scolds, which makes its puny *index expurgatorius*, which launches its Lilliputian anathemas, will be left severely alone, to mend its temper and improve its manners. The great teacher whose voice has just been silenced for English-speaking Christians (Canon Liddon) not rarely introduced controversial matter into his sermons. But controversy with him was always tempered by perfect fairness and perfect courtesy, and subordinated to a higher end. Each sermon was—what every sermon should be—a message of Divine love, inspiring to a Divine life. Do we not all perceive this tendency? Is not a new impulse working in countless hearts, and drawing together the democracies of the world with voices too often deepening in anger, but with new feelings and passionate conviction before which old political and polemical dissensions go down? I see them rising to their feet, the greatest host that time has ever known, and hear the murmur of millions speaking to millions across the sea in many languages. What there is in the gospel to rectify the relations of human life, to

elevate the selfishness of capital and chasten the selfishness of labour, to carry to homes improvement in the present and hope for the future—that will find eager listeners. But to the men of the near future religion will appear a barren and worthless stem, unless it be taught to clothe itself with the blossoms of worship, and to bear the fruits of human love. Choose, then, my fellow-Churchmen, which of the two you will—a Church which, clinging to eternal verities, can sever the temporal and accidental from the essential and the eternal—a Church which can interpret the living words that come to us through Christ and His apostles; which can continue His ministry of love; which seeks to make worship a joy and duty a life; which is a fountain of sweetness, and possesses a touch of power; which blesses and curses not. Yes! this—or a Church reactionary and retrogressive, blundering on in ruinous precedents, extracting from the present nothing but its bitterness, from the past nothing but its mistakes; mauldering in its sleep antiquated formulas from musty homilies; dying from its stupid head down to its stiff knees and its stony heart, no light in its filmy eyes, no health in its palsied hands, no worship on its icy lips. If we would attain to the great ends of a living Apostolic Church, we can do it only through the appointed conditions—fidelity to our principles, development both in worship and in work, and unity of peace and love.

Let me close by a brief paraphrase of the words of the inspired Apostle, from a part of which my motto has been taken¹—“As a people endowed with three great gifts of God—elect, consecrated, beloved—clothe and array yourselves with tender and truly human emotions of compassion, good-

¹ Col. iii. 12-15.

ness to others, humility in your own mind, sweet-naturedness, long-suffering ; forbearing one another, and forgiving each his fellow-partaker in the body of Christ, if any happen to have cause of complaint against any. Even as Christ forgave you by that one great redeeming act, so also do ye forgive. And over and above all these, clothe and array yourselves with that love which, taken in all its glorious entireness, is the enclasping girdle that holds together the various parts which make up the fair completeness of the Christian raiment. And let the peace of Christ be the arbiter in your hearts, to which ye were once for all called in one body ; and be ye thankful." I speak these words in the twenty-third year of my episcopate, with my fingers trembling as they bind the few latest sheaves of my autumnal harvest-field. They may be the last which I shall ever speak on such an occasion as this. "Now the Lord of peace Himself give you peace always by all means."



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